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What Remains? Dancing in the Archaeological Museum

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What Remains? Dancing in the Archaeological Museum

By

Marie-Louise Crawley

September 2018



***A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy***

Abstract

This research project is an investigation into the various negotiations of temporality that occur when dance enters the museum space. Above all, it aims to probe shifting experiences of temporality when choreography performs as museum exhibit, most specifically when these performances take place within the museum of ancient art and archaeology. Research questions include how we might consider the dance (or the dancer) in the archaeological museum as a counter-archive or, to use performance theorist Rebecca Schneider's (2001, 2011) reworking of French philosopher Michel Foucault's term, as a site of 'counter-memory.' If and when dance in the museum does become a site of counter-memory, might it then allow new visibility for those bodies - specifically those female bodies - previously misrepresented or rendered partially invisible by history?

My thesis argues that live dance performance in the museum possesses the potential to articulate the gaps, the intervallic spaces, between temporalities. My thinking here conflates and expands two recent ideas – Rebecca Schneider's theorizing on performance as 'perhaps another word for the intervallic' (Schneider 2016) and Georgina Guy's idea of the 'lacuna' between the performed and displayed which may be 'encountered anew and imagined through acts of theatre, exhibition and curation' (Guy 2015: 184) in the museum. By offering a space to allow for gaps or lacunae to appear, the dancing body in the museum opens up a space for other stories, other histories, to surface. As Tony Bennett (1995) reminds us, the museum is a training-ground to think about temporality, to think about time, differently: dance in the archaeological museum may then be considered a means to think about history differently.

This project situates itself firmly in the context of UK and continental European dance and performance studies yet, being naturally interdisciplinary, it also mines the fields of museum studies, ancient history, archaeology, and classical studies. Shifting between the positions of academic, choreographer and dancer, and between critical discourse and the poetic voices of practice, I adopt a collective methodology of a critical analysis review, based on an integration of i) hermeneutic phenomenology after French philosopher Paul Ricœur's explorations of time and narrative (1983, 1984, 1985, 2004) and ii) feminist inquiry, building on a re-interrogation of a vast body of scholarship in classics and in dance / performance studies in relation to the gaze; as well as a practice-as-research approach.

Dance practice is at the heart of this thesis, in the creation and performance of the solo durational choreographic work *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* for the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford. Through the practice, I ask how choreography, like archaeology, allows us to excavate the body and the past. Is this a practice about remembering - or dismembering - an ancient form? What happens when this re-/dismembering is put on display and exhibited in the museum? Through examining processes of dismembering and remembering, I claim dance performance in the museum as the 'fragmentary monumental,' an action that might be able to resituate women on the inside of power but on their own terms, and, eventually, to enable an alternative means of viewing history.

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Throughout this work on histories, heritages and memories, I have been especially aware of the influence of those teachers from whom I learned my craft, whose lineages I now carry in my own dancing body. Most especially, my deepest gratitude to my dear teacher, the late Marcel Marceau, who taught me all I know about *l’art du mime* and whose spirit certainly haunts this work. *Merci infiniment, maître.*

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Prologue

Close the heavy door behind you and step inside.

Feel the marble floor under your feet and take a look around you.

These are hallowed halls.

Look first to your left. Under the arch of the Corinthian columns, there is a long gallery ahead of you. Go on, don't be shy; explore it, walk its length.

On either side, there are rows of inscriptions in ancient tongues (foreign to you perhaps, but not to me). There are bits and pieces, fragments and sculptures and busts of men and women, gods and mortals alike, atop marble plinths. There are rows of body-less heads and headless bodies. It's quite the collection, isn't it?

The sculptures on display here in this gallery are part of the largest surviving portion of the first major collection of classical antiquities in Britain, all collected in the early seventeenth century by the first great English art collector, Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel.

But he came long after me, long after us. We were here first. Remember that.

It's quiet in here, isn't it?

It doesn't have to be, though. It isn't always so quiet. In fact, if you listen hard enough, you might be able to hear them whispering.

What's that you say? You can't hear them? Try again. Close your eyes. Listen.

There, the sound of whispers along corridors, resounding throughout the gallery. It's growing louder now, building in volume, a polyphonic chorus of chatting and giggling, laughing and squabbling, shouting, and sometimes even crying. My sisters.

Now, if you try very hard, if you really concentrate, if you squint your eyes and look between the cracks in these marble halls, you might start to see them too. You might only catch a glimpse of them at first, but keep on looking, and you'll see that they are there. Hand in hand and dancing down the corridors, their hair flowing, their feet tapping the rhythm of the dance. My sisters.

And sometimes leading the dance, and sometimes watching from the side, is our beautiful mother, Mnemosyne. Memory.

This place is her house.

This is the house of memory; this is our home.

This is our *museum*.

No one knows in fact where we first came from. Despite what they say in the history books, when you go that far back in time, when history becomes mixed up with mythology, it's all very mysterious and very unclear.

But say we dig a little further, a little deeper; let's find out what's underneath all the marble and gilt. Let's hollow out the earth, strip back the soil, dust off the treasures hidden beneath; let's get our hands dirty.

If you were to try to find a beginning, you would discover that our story probably starts somewhere in ancient central Greece, in a region called Boetia. Some say that we came from water; that we were nymphs worshipped at sacred springs, giving some sort of divine inspiration to those who came to bathe and to drink. There are ancient texts about us, written in Greek. Not all writers agree on our genealogy but most seem to think that we are the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (Memory). We were born in Pieria, at the foot of Mount Olympus.¹

It is the Greek poet Hesiod, writing sometime between 750 and 650 BCE, who gives the most famous account of us. In his *Theogony*, he tells that we are nine sisters, and he agrees that we are the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne. Our names: Clio, Euterpe, Thalia, Melpomene, Erato, Polymnia, Urania, Calliope and Terpsichore.² Say that litany with me. Speak our names out loud. Call us into the world again.

We each have our own jobs. It's all very matter of fact, you know. It isn't at all what those artists would have you believe, that we waft and float around in diaphanous dresses all day inspiring others. No, there's always real work to be done.

Look, there's Clio, the Muse of History, sitting at her lectern, with her open scrolls and chests of books, ready to read.

¹ Hesiod, *Theogony* 53; Homer, *Iliad*, 2.491; *Odyssey* 1.10; Apollodorus 1. 3 § 1

² Hesiod, *Theogony* 77

Then, over there, Calliope, the Muse of Epic Poetry, holding her tablet and her stylus, ready to write.

Next to her, Euterpe, the Muse of Lyric, her flute at her lips, ready to play.

And here is Melpomene, the Muse of Tragedy. She's the one clutching the straps of her tragic mask, ready to act.

And there's Erato, the Muse of Poetic Imitation, always ready to mimic.

At the heart of it all, there am I, Terpsichore, the Muse of the Dance; I'm leader of the chorus, I hold my lyre on my left side, and my head is crowned with vine leaves. I'm always ready to move, always ready to dance.

Standing next to me, very still, is Polymnia, the Muse of the Sublime Hymn, solemn and pensive, ready to think.

This one's Thalia, the Muse of Comedy, clutching her comic mask, her shepherd's staff and wreath of ivy and roses, giggling all the while, and ready to entertain.

And, last but not least, the odd one out, Urania, our scientist, our astronomer, her head in the stars.

It was Plutarch, a Roman writing in Greek, who gave us our collective name: *Mneiae*, or, if you like, the Remembrances.

The epic poet Homer thought we lived on Olympus.³ But you now know better. We live here, in this house of memory, in this museum, in this place of fragments and of half-written, un-written writing.

³ Homer, *Iliad* 2.484

The Roman scholar Varro, who came much later than Hesiod – apparently sometime between 116-27 BCE, but the dates are seemingly always a little hazy, as nothing in History is ever really known, is it? – Varro, he seems to think that we are only three.⁴ Perhaps he was alluding to the ‘original’ three Muses supposedly worshipped on Boetia’s Mount Helicon before the Greeks imagined the nine Olympian ones. Ours is a long story, you see.

Anyway, who’s to say what makes the original and what makes the copy?

Perhaps we are not nine then, but three: our names Melete, Aoide, and Mneme, one of us born from the dance of water, one born from sound striking the air and one embodied in the human voice. Melete – her name means ‘to contemplate’, she is the Muse of thought, and also of practice. Aoide – her name means ‘song’, the Muse of the voice. And, Mneme, whose name means ‘to remember’, the Muse of memory itself.

And yet, whether we are three or nine is not really important. For however many of us there are, you can see that ours is a story of art and of memory. It is always a story of art and of memory, of creating and of remembering.

Over the years, as the millennia and centuries have gone on, many have said that it is the Muses who give inspiration to others; it’s an old lie, that one, and it’s usually the female Muse inspiring the male artist. Keep that in mind: it’s a lie.

⁴ cf. Varro, *Disciplinarium Libri* 9. This is a ‘lost’ text, extant only in certain fragments related by later authors such as Augustine (*De ordine* 2.12.35; 2.20.54).

In fact, it is we Muses who are ourselves the artists, the best practitioners in our fields.

We are the personifications of knowledge and of the arts.

We are sisters.

We are knowledge-keepers.

We are artists.

We are a sisterhood, the makers of Art, of History, of Dance and of Writing.

It's all there, if you know where to look.

So, as you continue to wander through this gallery of Greek and Roman sculptures and then from one marble hall of the museum into another, I ask you to keep listening and to keep looking. For if you know what to look for, things are easy to see. The traces are always there.

Before you turn the page and move on to the first chapter, I have one last request of you. I ask that you please consider the book that you are now holding in your hands as its own museum. For this book is itself a collection, a recollection; it is a book of remembering half-remembered stories, of retelling those stories, and of dancing those stories.

It is a book of remembering dismembered history: our history, and yours.

So, this is our book, but please also consider it yours:

For if this is our museum, then it is also yours.

Μνάσεσθαι τινά φαμι καὶ ὕστεροῦσιν
[Someone, I say, will remember us, even in another time]
Sappho, fragment 30

1. Introduction

This thesis looks to what happens when dance enters the museum. Above all, it asks what happens when choreography ‘performs’ as museum exhibit, most specifically when that performance takes place within the museum of ancient art and archaeology. In particular, it asks questions about our understanding of time itself - and what shifting negotiations of temporality, and of history, begin to occur - when dance enters the archaeological museum. As Tony Bennett (1995) reminds us, the museum is a training-ground to think about temporality, to think about time, differently: this thesis principally asks whether dance in the archaeological museum may be considered a means to think about history differently.

Dance in the art museum in the UK and continental Europe is once again in the choreographic zeitgeist, with major events such as French choreographer Boris Charmatz’ *Musée de la danse* (‘Dancing Museum’) and Belgian choreographer Anna Teresa de Keersmaecker’s *Work / Travail / Arbeid* both at Tate Modern, London (UK), in 2015 and 2016 respectively, as select examples among many.⁵ However, dance in the museum of ancient history and archaeology currently seems a rarer

⁵ Select examples of dance in the art museum in the UK and continental Europe over the last three years alone show the current scale of such activity and include: Boris Charmatz’ *Musée de la danse* at Tate Modern, UK in 2015; Anna Teresa de Keersmaecker’s *Work / Travail / Arbeid* at Tate Modern, UK in 2016; Pablo Bronstein’s *Historical Dances in an Antique Setting* at Tate Britain, UK in 2016; Manuel Pelmus and Alexandra Pirici’s *Public Collection* at Tate Modern, UK in 2016, and the pan-European *Dancing Museums* project which ran from June 2015-March 2017 involving Arte Sella, Italy; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Netherlands; the Civic Museum in Bassano del Grappa, Italy; Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Austria; Le Louvre, France; MAC/VAL, France; and the National Gallery, UK.

phenomenon. There are historical antecedents for it: we might think of the pioneers of modern dance in the early twentieth-century such as Isadora Duncan (c.1877-1927) working in the British Museum, for example – but why dance in the archaeological museum today? This thesis hopes to provide a possible answer to this question, by claiming that when choreography performs as exhibit in the museum of ancient art and archaeology, the dance can be seen to offer itself up as, to use performance theorist Rebecca Schneider's reworking of philosopher Michel Foucault's term, a site of 'counter-memory' (2001: 106).⁶ Furthermore, if and when dance in the archaeological museum becomes a site of counter-memory, it asks whether it might allow a new, alternative visibility for those bodies, most specifically those female bodies, previously unrepresented, misrepresented or rendered at least partially invisible by history.

This thesis' central argument is that live dance performance in the archaeological museum possesses the potential to articulate and even bridge the gaps between temporalities. My thinking here conflates and expands a series of recent ideas: Rebecca Schneider's theorizing on performance as 'perhaps another word for the intervallic' (2016: unpaginated), Georgina Guy's idea of the 'lacuna' between the performed and displayed which may be 'encountered anew and imagined through acts of theatre, exhibition and curation' (2015: 184) in the museum, and the notion of 'minding the gap' as outlined by both Jeff Friedman (2015) and Heike Roms (2016) in their respective studies of performative oral history. I am especially drawn to what Roms (2016) coins a 'historio-dramaturgical' approach where re-do (which is more

⁶ Here I am also informed by Schneider's 2011 argument (developing her 2001 essay) that it is inaccurate to say that performance disappears, as Peggy Phelan (1993) does, and that the archive remains; but rather that performance remains, albeit 'differently' (Schneider 2011: 98). Schneider again uses the term 'counter-memory' to posit that the live, performing body has indeed always been in the archive, transmitting across generations through a 'body to body transmission' (ibid: 105).

than re-enactment) in itself creates an alternative present where formerly unrealized histories are given form. Through an exploration of what might be meant by the gap, the lacuna and the intervallic - and the subtle but significant differences between these three terms - I argue that the live female dancer's body in the museum offers a space to allow certain gaps or lacunae to appear, and thereby opens up a space for other stories, other previously unrealized histories, to surface.

Such alternatives to received narratives of history in turn lead me to think of French philosopher Paul Ricœur's explorations of intra-temporality, and the complex relationships that exist between time (*le temps*) and narrative (*le récit*) (Ricœur 1983, 1984, 1985, 2004). Ricœur's theories on time and narrative are an important underpinning in my own hermeneutic phenomenological enquiry of the questions of the live dancer in the archaeological museum, as they helpfully provide a lens through which to interrogate that somewhat thorny problematic of the dancing body as simultaneously ephemeral and archival. While, for Ricœur, semantics and semiotics play an important role in written discourse (narrative) as a temporally oriented process, in those 'archives available for individual and collective memory' (1991: 107), I am interested in how narrative works as a temporally oriented process when sited in and 'written' on the body, and how the dancing body in the museum itself then becomes an archive available for individual and collective memory.

Whilst firmly rooted in the context of UK and continental European dance and performance studies,⁷ because of the questions it asks and the site in which it does this

⁷ I am conscious that throughout this thesis I elide dance and performance studies together. While aware of their differences, I am here following interdisciplinary approaches (cf. Elswit 2018) as to how we might define them. In particular, there is considerable overlap (and potential confusion) as to what

asking, this thesis is naturally interdisciplinary, mining the fields of museum studies, ancient history, archaeology, and classical studies. In particular, it situates itself at the interface of dance studies, and classics, the study of ancient Greek and Latin literature, history and culture. Its intended audience is therefore wide reaching: it is written for dancers and performance practitioners and researchers, and academics in these fields, but also for classics scholars, archaeologists, ancient historians and anyone interested in wider history and museum culture. Given the focus on dance practice-as-research as a central methodology, it is also of interest to anyone using embodied methods of research. I hope that it will speak in particular to those who wish to build on the vast body of knowledge of practice-as-research that is already established in dance and performance studies and apply this knowledge to other disciplines in the humanities beginning to embrace embodied methods of research. I am thinking here of the potential that this thesis offers for knowledge exchange between dance scholarship and classical reception (the reception of classical performance forms and texts in contemporary culture), or between dance scholarship and sensory archaeology, for example.

Shifting between the positions of academic, choreographer and dancer, and between critical discourse and the poetic voices of practice, this thesis adopts a collective methodology of a critical analysis review, based on an integration of i) hermeneutic phenomenology after French philosopher Paul Ricœur's explorations of time and narrative (1983, 1984, 1985, 2004) and ii) feminist inquiry, building on a re-interrogation of a vast body of scholarship in classics and in dance / performance

is defined as dance and what is defined as performance in the art museum space. However, while my own practice could be seen as situated somewhere between dance performance and art exhibit, I am clear to define it as choreographic and the work as dance, rather than performance art, live art, or installation.

studies in relation to the gaze; as well as a practice-as-research approach. Dance practice is at the heart of this thesis, in the creation and performance of the solo durational choreographic work *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* for the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology. This work was developed over eighteen months, through long-term residencies at the Archive of Performance of Greek and Roman Drama, University of Oxford (hereafter referred to as the APGRD) and the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford, the world's first university museum and, founded in 1683, the UK's oldest. It was performed in various iterations from March 2017-April 2018 as each of the four danced 'fragments' ('*Galatea*', *Myrrha*, *Philomela* and *Medusa*) developed, and that accumulative process is reflected in the writing of this thesis. The final durational dance work comprising all four solos, and forming part of this thesis' submission, was presented over two weeks in April 2018 during the museum's usual opening hours (10am-5pm)⁸. Performed on three of the museum's iconic glass balconies and walkways⁹, the solos cycled continuously throughout the day. Over the course of these dates, there were 17,426 visitors to the museum, many of whom would have experienced or caught sight of the work from varying perspectives.¹⁰

The dance practice in the museum builds on the potential of principles from the ancient Roman dance form, *tragoedia saltata* (namely that it was a solo, masked and narrative dance form), and 're-imagines' ancient sources in order to find new

⁸ *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* was performed in its entirety in the Ashmolean on 17th, 20th, 21st, 24th, 27th and 28th April 2018.

⁹ The glass walkways were a distinctive feature of the Ashmolean's re-build in 2009. Designed by Rick Mather, the balconies and walkways look out onto, and connect, different galleries, aiming to suggest the connections between crossing cultures and time periods.

¹⁰ Visitor numbers for the performance dates were as follows: Tuesday 17th April – 2086 visitors; Friday 20th April – 1997 visitors; Saturday 21st April – 3645 visitors; Tuesday 24th April – 2260 visitors; Saturday 28th April – 4366 visitors and Sunday 29th April visitors – 3072 visitors.

possibilities for twenty-first century performance. It seeks to ask how choreography, like archaeology, allows us to excavate the body and the past. Is this a practice about remembering - or dismembering - an ancient form? What happens when this re-/dismembering is put on display and exhibited in the museum? It is important to note how the practice itself places the dancer into the archaeological museum as an exhibit, in order to subvert the idea of the female body as archival 'object,' or artifact, historically subjected to the 'gaze' (after Laura Mulvey [1975]) of the male collector. By investigating and critiquing ideas of the logic of the museum (or archival) space as arguably patrilineal (as well as west-identified and white-cultural, as Rebecca Schneider [2001, 2011] argues), this thesis asks how the introduction of the moving, dancing female body in the museum might allow certain buried histories to surface and be 're-collected.'

We often think of the museum as a temple to memory, as the resting-place of history and as the space in which we come to reflect upon that history, to recollect. Yet the very etymological definition of 'museum' is a shrine to the Muses; in my own dance practice in the Ashmolean, the museum is very specifically the shrine to both Clio, the muse of History, and also to Terpsichore, the muse of the Dance. When I think of Clio and Terpsichore at play in the archaeological museum, I cannot help but see before me traces of dance scholar Susan Foster's vivid description in *Choreographing History* (1995) of the duet between these two Muses, dressed in their combat boots and sneakers, as they enter some sort of choreographic tussle. In Foster's imagination, their sweaty, fleshy duet is a dialogue playing out the tensions, frictions and collisions between the rhetorical body and the dancing body. For Foster, Terpsichore senses 'the need to rationalize choreography as persuasive discourse' and

Clio realizes ‘the need to bring movement and fleshiness into historiography’ (Foster 1995: 18). These Muses know their differences, yet they also have an idea of their common strength: the positive force of a coalition emerging from their collision, a coalition to resist and disembody the ‘tyrant’ (ibid). As I dance in the archaeological museum, I too feel that I am playing out this collision and coalition between Clio and Terpsichore. In a practice that somehow attempts to offer an alternative visibility for those who have been partially buried by history, and of whom only fragments are remaining, the coalition of Clio and Terpsichore together presents a resistance against the looming tyrant of a patrilineal, institutionalised history. These two sister Muses are at work resisting the *status quo* that the museum as a house of authority, of institutionalised power, might represent. However, the picture that Foster paints is itself fragmentary and incomplete. Throughout this thesis, I propose the addition of a third character, an older (perhaps wiser) figure waiting in the wings, watching and witnessing: Memory. For, lest we forget, the mother of the Muses – and of Clio and Terpsichore - was Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory. It is Memory who births History, it is Memory who births the Dance, and it is she who will eventually call them to account.

If we return to the ancient Greek idea of the archive - the *ἀρχεῖον* - as the home of the tyrant who has the power, we might say that the archaeological museum houses the very monuments of history and of collective memory that define who holds the power and who does not. This idea necessarily relies on a definition of a museum as the very embodiment of historical, cultural heritage. In looking at a museum like the Ashmolean, it is important to keep in mind the high stakes of its history and politics as the UK’s oldest museum and, moreover, as a teaching

museum,¹¹ as well as the fact that such museums emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as storehouses of collective cultural memory. As such, we might think of the museum as a permanent and static fixture embodying cultural memory (what Diana Taylor [2003] would indeed classify as an archive). Yet, as I will outline in chapter two, due to the institutional developments brought about by the movement of the ‘new museology,’¹² museums have gradually become - and are becoming - much more fluid, transient spaces where the historicised past meets the present moment. It is within this framework that performance has entered the museum. In fact, as museology scholar Helen Rees Leahy suggests, it is ‘the inherent transience and fluidity of performance that confronts the apparent solidity and stasis of the museum’ (Rees Leahy 2011: 28). It is performance, which takes place in the present moment, in all its brokenness and incompleteness, but also in its movement, that challenges the static, frozen quality of the institution. Rees Leahy’s suggestion chimes with Foster’s description of the battling, moving Muses. Terpsichore challenges Clio to enter the fray which then becomes a dance; and, as Foster suggests, it is this constant movement, this dance, which then resists, challenges and disrupts the authorial stasis of the museum as archive, the house of collective memory.

Writing on museum and heritage theatre, performance and theatre scholar Paul Johnson points to performance in the museum as a potential alternative means of writing history:

¹¹ Elias Ashmole founded the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology in Oxford (UK) in 1683. Importantly, it is part of the University of Oxford itself, and since its foundation, the triple combination of collection, teaching and research has remained the institution’s distinguishing feature.

¹² Since the 1970s, the museum world has undergone significant and radical changes. Political and economic pressures have meant that museum professionals have shifted their attention away from their collections and towards a more viewer-centred ethos. Attempting to end the traditional elitism of the museum and to ensure greater accessibility to these public spaces, the profession has been marked by a self-reflexivity that has become known as a ‘new museology.’

If in the New Museology, [...] meaning is socially determined and assigned, then surely history must be written in a similar way, and indeed the museum or heritage site is one of the locations where an embodied form of that writing takes place, and so performance itself can be one of the ways of writing. (Johnson 2011: 58)

While Johnson is here talking about museum theatre, he makes a valid point for what dance performance might also be doing in the archaeological museum. As the writing of the dance, choreography in the museum offers an alternative means of how we might write history. Yet it also offers an alternative method for how we might read history too, and how we might view it. This thesis asks exactly how dance performance does this, in relation to the ideas of the monumental (the solid, static objects of collective memory, as defined by those holding the power) and the fragmentary (a defining feature of performance).

Indeed, whilst the museum might purport to exhibit the monumental, these monuments are dislocated in time and space: they are often incomplete and fragmented. We need only think of the Parthenon Marbles housed in the British Museum, and the gaps remaining on the Parthenon, where they originally were; the Marbles are half here and half there, suspended across geographical space as well as across historical time.¹³ It is this dislocation and fragmentation that can lend such poignancy to seeing ancient objects on display. Furthermore, as theatre and performance scholar Jennifer Parker-Starbuck writes, the very nature of their fragmentation has now become an almost *performative* feature of museum exhibition and display:

A shift toward how collections and objects perform histories, and what the performative curatorial strategies of cultural narratives might signal about these histories, has begun to shape museums very differently. I was, for

¹³ Their current location remains a bone of contention, as arguments for and against their repatriation to Athens continue cf. Jenkins (2016).

example, surprisingly moved when I visited the then newly opened Acropolis Museum in Athens. Walking through the great hall around the replica of the Acropolis, studying the spaces where the missing Parthenon Marbles belonged as I looked upward at the actual Parthenon on the hill was a surprisingly poignant moment – the missing objects were specifically curated to be as belonging within the gaps in the reconstruction. (Parker-Starbuck 2017: 9)

It is the gaps between that seem to speak to us across time and space. This thesis will address how these gaps speak through the dance.

Thinking about connections between writing, reading, viewing and dancing history, leads me to highlight the relationship between choreography and archaeology that is central to this thesis. I am indebted here to an argument first made by archaeological scholars Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley in their seminal text *Re-Constructing Archaeology* (1992 [1987]), and in particular their reading of the archaeologist as some sort of time-traveller navigating between the past (that which is being ‘re-constructed’) and the present (the point at which that re-construction is happening in the here and now). Shanks and Tilley’s reading of the archaeologist’s relationship with time rests on an understanding of the contrast between history and memory. History, a word containing both a subjective and objective genitive (Ricœur, 1981), is to be regarded both as what has happened and the apprehension of that happening. As such, it does not take place primarily as a past event, that which is gone, for ‘there is no abstract concept of ‘event’ which exists separately from the practice of apprehending and comprehending the past’ (Shanks and Tilley 1992 [1987]: 17). As Shanks and Tilley point out, there is no verb corresponding to the noun ‘history’ and the absence of such a verb, ‘to history’, is something that they wish their study to address. There is a related verb – ‘to remember’; and memory ‘presumes the active practice of remembering, incorporating past into present; it is a

suspension of the subject-object distinction' (ibid). Furthermore, memory is linked to storytelling, a mnemonic act addressing an audience. Here the archaeologist becomes a 'story-teller' (again Shanks and Tilley's term) and the act of remembering the past becomes a performance. Furthermore, it is a performance that does not attempt to construct a coherent continuity, to tell the whole story. Such an attempt would be fruitless, as the past is never fixed, it is forever being re-interpreted, and the hermeneutic re-interpreting is endless:

The archaeologist may textually cement one piece of the past together but almost before the cement has dried it begins to crack and rot [...] archaeology should be conceived as the process of the production of a textual heterogeneity which denies finality and closure; it is a suggestion that archaeologists live a new discursive, practical relation with the past. This relation is one of ceaseless experiment, dislocation, refusal and subversion of the notion that the past can ever be 'fixed' or 'tied down' by archaeologists in the present. It involves an emphasis on the polyvalent qualities of the past always inscribed in the here and now (Shanks and Tilley 1992 [1987]: 20)

Shanks and Tilley's ground-breaking argument has undeniably paved the way for how I consider the choreographer and dancer in the museum to be very similar to the archaeologist. The dancer in the museum is navigating past and present; she is 'doing' history, remembering, storytelling; choreography, like archaeology, continually inscribes 'the polyvalent qualities of the past' in its present-ness. The relationship between archaeology and performance has emerged as influential on performance theory and practice (Pearson and Shanks, 2001) and questions concerning connections between the two disciplines have been addressed at length by Giannachi, Kaye and Shanks (2012). Building on these studies exploring the 'negotiations of tenses of place and time' (Giannachi, Kaye and Shanks 2012: 11) that both archaeology and performance entail, and while not wishing to do a disservice to archaeologists, this thesis suggests that, in such negotiations, dance in the museum

perhaps has the power to go even further than archaeology. Dance in the museum is, in a sense, something I have begun to coin as ‘radical archaeology.’ For whereas archaeologists aim to survey, excavate and produce texts, and there is no recourse to an *empathetic* (or bodily) understanding of the past,¹⁴ in my museum practice, the dance aims to communicate the emotions and sensations of women from the past to its viewers and to encourage in them an empathetic, visceral connection to the past. This ‘radical archaeology,’ that takes place in the *bodies* of both the dancer and the viewer / witness, is a grounding principle behind this thesis.¹⁵

In terms of this project’s relationship to the study of the classical world, the re-focussing of the primacy of the body is a key concern. In the late 1990s, as an undergraduate of classics who was also a trained dancer, I often felt a dissatisfaction or frustration in the scholarly study of ancient performance texts. Although I was fortunate enough to have been influenced by classicists such as Oliver Taplin and Fiona Macintosh who tirelessly argued how these are texts not just to be read, but also to be performed, sung and danced,¹⁶ I felt that the body was often forgotten. In working on an ancient Greek tragic chorus, for example, even if I could study the words, I could not study the steps. I could not grasp the body’s movement. The choreography, the writing of the body, was absent from the writing on the page, even if traces of it still remained, buried in the rhythms of the ancient Greek poetic text.

¹⁴ Except perhaps in the field of sensory classical archaeology (e.g. Betts, 2017), where there is some overlap with my own propositions. However, sensory classical Roman archaeology has to date tended to focus on the sonic and haptic rather than the kinaesthetic.

¹⁵ My idea of dance as radical archaeology chimes with work currently being proposed in the fields of both phenomenology and sensory studies in archaeology, and I am grateful to the Sensory Studies in Antiquity network (www.sensorystudiesinantiquity.com) to which I belong for opening my own senses to the promotion of study of senses in the ancient world among archaeologists and ancient historians.

¹⁶ I am thinking in particular of Taplin’s key works *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (1977) and *Greek and Tragedy in Action* (1978) which marked a move in scholarship that rightly took ancient Greek tragic texts away from the page and back towards the stage.

I am happy to say that in the intervening twenty years since I was such a frustrated undergraduate, the field has opened up considerably, thanks primarily to the work of scholars such as Taplin and Macintosh among others.¹⁷ Their research centre at the University of Oxford, the APGRD (where in 2017 I was Artist-in-Residence for six months, and during which residency the work that became *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* was initially developed) has played a pivotal role in establishing performance reception studies, and indeed performance studies, as vital and flourishing branches of classical scholarship. Macintosh's work on classical reception in dance has been, and continues to be, especially invaluable in putting the dancer's body at the heart of things: her edited collection *The Ancient Dancer in the Modern World* (2010) traces the wealth of classical influences upon modern dance-works including those by Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham,¹⁸ Fred Astaire and Pina Bausch. However, what still tends to be missing from the debate is an exploration of ancient dance from a practice-as-research perspective. This thesis aims in part to begin to address this gap.

As an independent choreographer, my former dissatisfaction with not being able to 'feel' the dance movement that was as much a part of ancient performance as the text, was in part assuaged when I was invited by the APGRD and the University of Oxford's Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology to be a participating

¹⁷ Notably through the opening of the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD) at the University of Oxford in 1996 and which was founded by Edith Hall and Oliver Taplin. The APGRD's focus is the study of performances of ancient epic and drama worldwide ranging from original performances in antiquity to the present day. Its current director is Fiona Macintosh.

¹⁸ Having trained in Graham technique in France with Georges Gatecloud-dit-Bellecroix (former assistant of Graham dancer Yuriko Kikuchi) and then having spent some time at the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance in New York, as a dancer I myself was naturally aware of Graham's works drawing on heroines from ancient Greek mythology and literature - *Night Journey* (1948), *Clytemnestra* (1958) *Cave of the Heart* (1946), *Errand into the Maze* (1947), *Alcestis* (1960) *Phaedra* (1962) and *Circe* (1963). It is true that while my dance in the museum is not ostensibly or intentionally marked by any direct choreographic reference to Graham technique, the ghosts of Graham and her Greek heroines certainly haunt my own dancer's body, in spirit if not in letter.

choreographer in the 2013 TORCH research project, ‘Ancient Dance in Modern Dancers’ (ADMD) led by Helen Slaney, Caroline Potter and Sophie Bocksberger.¹⁹ This was a collaborative, practice-based research project investigating how dancers process classical stimulus material (classical texts) in order to create a ‘reconstructive’ performance of the ancient Roman dance form, *tragoedia saltata*. The project was my first introduction to this dance form and led to further choreographic work investigating the genre with independent performance ensemble, Avid for Ovid,²⁰ formed by three other performers from the ADMD project, dancer-choreographers Susie Crow and Ségolène Tarte, and musician Malcolm Atkins. It was whilst working on both these projects that I began to play with the idea of how the dancer can ‘incarnate’²¹ a classical text, making it flesh and blood, bringing it back to the body. My work on both the ADMD project and with Avid for Ovid is undeniably the genesis of the practice and thinking contained in this thesis, and certainly explains in part a pre-thesis sensibility for working at the interface of classics and dance studies as a choreographer-researcher using practice-as-research. In addition, this pre-thesis sensibility coincided with a realisation that my other choreographic practice - outside of these ‘classical’ projects - was increasingly taking place in gallery and museum settings.²² It therefore made sense to ask what would happen if the classical practice took place in the archaeological museum and so this particular project was born.

¹⁹ <http://torch.ox.ac.uk/ancientdance>

²⁰ <http://avidforovid.blogspot.co.uk>

²¹ I take this term from theatre director Ariane Mnouchkine with whom I worked for seven years as a performer in her company, the Théâtre du Soleil (France). Mnouchkine uses ‘incarnation’ to describe how the performer ‘must live the detail of every present moment through the body. We might call this embodiment, but for me it goes further than that [...] the visceral, fleshy quality of this term seems to describe better what the actor is trying to achieve’ (Crawley 2018b: 166). Interestingly, it is also a term used by archaeologist Michael Shanks in conversation with artist Lynn Hershman, when describing the archaeological process: ‘Material preservation won’t work [...] You have to take things up and rework them, remix them [...] To make them live again. It’s reincarnation, literally. You incarnate’ (Hershman and Shanks 2012: 234).

²² Such as a 2014 residency creating new choreographic work for the Tate / ARTIST ROOMS Robert Therrien exhibit at mac Birmingham.

One final point to make here is the increasingly urgent socio-political dimension that this project has acquired over the course of its dancing and writing. Given the feminist framework of my argument, the relationship between women and structures of power has been one of my central preoccupations from the outset of this project. I pause here to remember the sensations of shock and anger that I felt on an initial site visit to the Ashmolean when I first encountered the female Romano-Egyptian mummies on display in the museum's Ancient Egypt and Nubia galleries. Some of these female 'remains' even have mummy portraits, painstakingly restored prior to the Ashmolean's re-display and the £5 million Egypt project that brought them out from storage in 2011. The oldest of these portraits, on linen, is of a young woman dating from 55-70 CE: she was excavated by Flinders Petrie (1853-1942) at the Roman cemeteries of Hawara in Fayum, south west of Cairo, in 1911. However, while this woman's body – and a representation of her face - is undeniably materially present in the Ashmolean, I was struck by how her story, and a sense of who she was, is absent. On seeing her body and the bodies of other 'unknown' women on display, I began to ask who these women really were. Similarly, on that same day, as I walked through the museum's gallery 21, the Randolph Greek and Roman Sculpture Gallery, my eyes were drawn towards a marble sculpture of a seated woman. This statue was missing both its head and arms. The label next to her informed me that she is a Roman artefact (50-150CE) considered to be 'likely Terpsichore, the muse of the dance.' Headless and faceless, she is not nameless. She is somehow identifiable, despite missing her arms and the harp that would have rested on her left side. She is defined by missing the very object that defines her; she is defined by what is missing, by absence, by lack. Looking at her, I realised that we cannot even be sure that she actually is who we think she might be; she is only *likely* Terpsichore. Face to (not)



Fig. 1: Roman sculpture of 'likely Terpsichore', Randolph Gallery of Greek and Roman Sculpture, Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford. Photograph: Brandon Kahn.

face with this broken woman, I was troubled. Her fragmented body stopped me in my tracks. What of the gap between who she actually was and whom we think she might have been? Who was she, really? Who is she? Such were the initial prompting questions behind the dance practice of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*: note too that it was the curt descriptive label next to this sculpture that gave the final durational dance-work its title. On that very first day in the museum, as I continued to look around, to wander among the artefacts, a desire grew within me, a desire to dance in that space; a desire for dance to have the metaphorical potential to smash the glass enclosing the exhibited female remains of the Ashmolean's Romano-Egyptian mummified bodies, or to become the mobile site of an embodied experience of an ancient Athenian bride painted on an Attic vase and 'silenced' for centuries, fixed in pigment. This was going to be a practice not so much about collection in the museum but *re-collection*, in both senses of the word.

Such a desire to re-collect female stories and let the maimed, fragmented and silenced bodies dance and ‘speak’ for themselves therefore marked this project from the outset, but the course of global current affairs throughout its development has made this desire yet more pressing and urgent, if that were even possible. Two events took place over the course of this thesis’ dancing and writing: firstly, the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States in November 2016, following an electoral campaign arguably marked by an underlying sexism which resulted in Hillary Clinton not managing to smash the ultimate glass ceiling,²³ and secondly, the tidal wave of the international #MeToo social media movement against sexual harassment and assault following the public revelations of sexual misconduct allegations against film producer Harvey Weinstein in 2017.²⁴ As I was dancing and writing this thesis, the tropes of women and power, and the silencing and silence of women, marked international news broadcasts. Clinton’s loss of the American presidential campaign - and perhaps most notably the way in which the widespread media portrayed Clinton²⁵ - pointed to the still-engrained misogyny in contemporary society, while the #MeToo movement marked a bold outpouring of female testimony, a sudden refusal to be silent any longer. Much like the museum women and the classical heroines, thousands of female voices were clamouring to be heard, and were finally speaking out.²⁶

²³ For a study of the electoral role of sexism in the 2016 US Presidential election campaign, see Valentino *et al* (2018).

²⁴ The #MeToo Movement spread virally in October 2017 as a hashtag on social media to draw attention to the widespread prevalence of sexual harassment, particularly in the workplace. American social activist, Tamar Burke coined the phrase as early as 2016, although it was popularised by American actress, Alyssa Milano, on Twitter on October 15th 2017, as she encouraged women who had experienced sexual harassment or assault to tweet about it using the phrase. By the following day, the hashtag had been retweeted more than 500,000 times.

²⁵ See Freeman (2017).

²⁶ In December 2017, *Time* magazine announced the #MeToo Movement as their Person of the Year 2017, naming the women at the vanguard of the social media movement as ‘The Silence Breakers’ on its front cover and celebrating the thousands of women who had used the social media hashtag.

Among the many voices raised that autumn, I am indebted to one above all: that of pre-eminent classics scholar Mary Beard. In November 2017, almost a year after Clinton's defeat, and a month after the first appearance of the social media hashtag #MeToo, Beard published the bestselling book *Women and Power*; the book's primary subject is female silence. Returning to Greek and Roman antiquity, Beard's short 'manifesto' aims to take a 'long view on the culturally awkward relationship between the voice of women and the public sphere of speech-making, debate and comment' (Beard 2017: 8). I will return briefly to Beard's rousing arguments in chapter eight, but her key argument - the extent to which the exclusion of women from power is culturally embedded - speaks loud and clear to the aims of this thesis. The resurgence of the *visibility* of the complexities of women's relationships to power made my desire to exhibit such relationships in the patrilineal space of the museum ever more urgent and ever more necessary.

Related to this desire which underpins the entire research project is an explanation for the multiplicity of voices that marks both the content and format of this thesis. As both the choreographic project and the thesis progressed, a poetic voice of practice became increasingly present and vocal. This is a voice that, I hope, speaks to - and enhances - the critical voice of theory and *vice versa*. It seems only appropriate for a project that has at its heart the desire to let the bodies of the past speak in the present to let the voice of practice speak in its own form. As such, within this thesis, and particularly in its second half, fragments of poetic text (the voice of practice) dance alongside the voice of critical, philosophical discourse. In addition, I ask the reader to remember that there is always another, third 'voice' here too: that of the dance itself. While recollections of the dance are contained in the memories of

those reading this thesis who themselves witnessed the live performance event in the museum, as well as in the video documentation that accompanies this thesis for those who did not, there is also the voice of dance, the voice of Terpsichore. She resonates most loudly in the prologue and epilogue that frame this thesis, but she is present in every gesture and every word contained here, dancing through time and space.

Chapter Outline

This chapter outline introduces the structure of the thesis. Following this *Introduction*, chapter two, *Clio's Question: Museum Fever?*, takes a broad view of dance and performance in the museum, especially in the context of the apparent current trend for dance in the modern art museum. It then looks to the body of literature produced in response to this discernible 'museum fever' (to adapt a phrase from Derrida [1995a]), exploring key terms and concepts moving forward - counter-memory, counter-archive, body as archive - and interrogating scholarship by Gabriele Brandstetter (2015 [1995]), Rebecca Schneider (2001, 2011), Diana Taylor (2003) and André Lepecki (2010) among others. In so doing, it seeks to ground the thesis project firmly in relation to dance studies. The second half of the chapter then aims to situate this project within the wider context of current museum professional practice. More specifically, it begins to interrogate concepts of materiality and immateriality as they relate to performance practices within the museum.

Chapter three *Terpsichore's Question: Philosophising Dance?* introduces the two parallel methodological frameworks grounding the thesis: i) hermeneutic phenomenology after French philosopher Paul Ricœur's explorations of time, history, memory and narrative (1983, 1984, 1985, 2004) and ii) feminist inquiry, building on a

re-interrogation of a vast body of scholarship in classics and in dance / performance studies in relation to the gaze. These frameworks underscore the entirety of the thesis and are frequently returned to in later chapters (most specifically, chapters seven and eight). Chapter three also presents arguments for practice-as-research as a valid research method for this project.

Chapter four, *Dancing Out of the Theatre and Into the Museum*, takes a broader look at the field of practice of dance in the museum in the UK today. It looks to choreographers whose current practice in the museum has significantly impacted my own practice and thinking. The chapter examines three central case studies - Pablo Bronstein's *Historical Dances in an Antique Setting* (Tate Britain, April-October 2016), Manuel Pelmus and Alexandra Pirici's *Public Collection* (Tate Modern, June-July 2016) and the National Gallery residency of the *Dancing Museums* project (National Gallery, November 2016) – in order to highlight how some of the UK's most highly renowned art museums have recently been working with 'dance.' It aims to give a broad sense of what choreographic practice in the art museum in the UK looks like in the current moment. Whilst each of these practices are very different, common questions arise; questions about what it means to reconstruct historical art objects, to re-imagine or re-contextualise them in another art-form, to 'copy' an original whilst making it a springboard for new and distinct work, and thereby to re-view a historical collection and perhaps even reclaim, or reimagine, history.

Chapters five to eight then tighten focus on my own practice-as-research, as it emerged for and in the Ashmolean, with each chapter focussing on one of the four choreographic fragments that together make up *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*.

Chapter five, *Re-Collection in the Museum: Remembering, Dismembering and 'Performance as Archive'*, introduces my choreographic practice-as-research, relating choreographing in the museum to ideas of remembering and dismembering and how we might 're-collect' history through dance performance in the museum. In this chapter, I argue for 'performance as archive' as a methodology for historical research, charting the early development of the solo dance fragment, *Myrrha*.

Chapter six, *Masking the Dance, Unmasking History?* looks to the importance of the mask in my museum dance practice and focuses on the *Philomela* fragment. It introduces themes of how we look, and are looked at; and how we look back, both in terms of returning the onlooker's gaze and looking back through history. Chapter seven, *Sisters Resisting the Gaze: Releasing Classical Heroines Back Into the Museum*, investigates theories of the gaze in classical scholarship and explores how I use these theories in relation to the development of my choreographic practice in the museum, with particular reference to feminist classical scholar Patricia Salzman-Mitchell's (2005) work on the gaze in Roman author Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, itself the ancient source text for my choreographic work, and her argument for the importance and potential of a female 'witnessing gaze' in Ovid's work.

Chapter eight *Witnessing the 'Still Dance'* builds on notions of the witnessing gaze and its relation to mobility and stillness. The chapter first focuses on the development of the dance fragment '*Galatea*' to posit 'stillness-that-is-not-quite stillness' as a choreographic strategy that allows dance to step out of the linear temporality of representation and into a different economy of time and presence. Finally, the chapter returns to the key philosophical underpinnings the thesis: ideas of

history, memory, narrative, fragments and monuments, and how these feed into my dance practice in the museum. Looking to the fourth dance fragment, *Medusa*, this final chapter concludes by seeking to claim dance performance in the museum as the ‘fragmentary monumental,’ an action that might be able to resituate women on the inside of power but on their own terms, and, eventually, to enable an alternative means of viewing history.

2. Clio's Question: Museum Fever?

Introduction

As stated in the *Introduction*, although firmly rooted in the context of UK and continental European dance and performance studies, the interdisciplinary nature of this thesis means that it quite naturally mines the fields of museum studies, ancient history, and classics. As such, in terms of a review of the fields' literature, this thesis has developed from a study of wide-ranging sources. This chapter aims to uncover these wide sources, layer by layer, in much the same way as an archaeologist would, peeling back the various strata to reveal what has been concealed, to shake off the detritus and to hold what has been uncovered up to the light. Finally, my job, much like the archaeologist, is to look for gaps and hairline cracks in the newly discovered treasures, and to work out how it might all be re-assembled. In other words, as I read, I am haunted by the preoccupations of Clio, the Muse of History: how might all these partial stories telling different sides of the story come together and be more fully re-imagined? How might partial stories be given full flesh?

To start with the broader view, I have previously mentioned how dance and performance in the art museum in the UK and in continental Europe is once again very much in the choreographic zeitgeist (see above, p. 7). There have been several recent publications responding to this 'museum fever' - to rework Jacques Derrida's term, and the title of his work discussing the nature and function of the archive, *Le mal d'archive* (1995a) translated into English as *Archive Fever* (1995b) - which have informed the general terrain. These publications are most notably Georgina Guy's

Theatre, Exhibition and Curation: Displayed and Performed (2016), Sara Wookey's *Who Cares? Dance in the Gallery and in the Museum* (2015), the *Dance Research Journal* 46:3 'Special Issue: Dance in the Museum' (2014), the *Theatre Journal* Special Issue 69:3 'Theatre and the Museum: Cultures of Display' (2017) and *Performance Paradigm* 13 'Performance, Choreography and the Gallery' (2017). For my own study here, it is important to unpick the differences between what we mean by dance in the museum, performance in the museum and theatre in the museum, and I will return to these differences moving forwards. It is also important to note that, very often, these publications address the question of dance / performance in the art museum – and more specifically, dance in the museum of modern art. Dance in the museum of ancient history and archaeology is a rarer phenomenon and there is a significant gap in scholarship that this thesis aims to start to fill.

'Permanent' archive and 'ephemeral' dance?

I would like to start with a thorny question for a study that is specifically examining dance in the archaeological museum. The research in this thesis inevitably focuses on the ontology of the museum, arguably an archival space, and the place of dance, arguably an ephemeral art form, within that. The problematic of the binary notion of performance as ephemeral has been examined by various performance studies scholars, most notably Rebecca Schneider's 'Performance remains' (2001) in response to Peggy Phelan (1993), Diana Taylor (2003) following Schneider (2001) and then Schneider's 2011 commentary on Taylor. Within this well documented problematic, the concept of the moving, dancing body as counter-memory is integral to my own argument. Here I am indebted to Joseph Roach (1996), as well as to

Schneider (2001; 2011) and Taylor (2003) and their explorations of the importance of the body within investigations of theatre history and performance theory. Roach has argued for the importance of juxtaposing ‘living memory as restored behaviour against a historical record of scripted archives’ (Roach 1996: 11) in performance research, suggesting that the projects of the French *annalistes* of the twentieth century engage with performative practices that are transmitted somatically across generations and cultures. Similarly, as I have pointed out above (p. 8, fn. 6), Schneider posits that the live, performing body has entered the archive, and indeed has always been in the archive, transmitting across generations through ‘body to body transmission [...] a counter-memory’ (Schneider 2011: 105). This argument is reinforced by Diana Taylor (2003) who makes a key distinction between the archive ‘of supposedly enduring materials (texts, documents, buildings, bones) and the so-called *repertoire* of embodied practice / knowledge (spoken language, dance, ritual)’ (Taylor 2003: 19). Taylor argues against the fixity of the archive, stating that the function of the repertoire is to enact

embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing – in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, non- reproducible knowledge...As opposed to the supposedly stable objects in the archive, the actions that are the repertoire do not remain the same. The repertoire both keeps and transforms choreographies of meaning. (Taylor 2003: 20-1)

The idea of fluid and fluctuating choreographies of meaning and embodied memory is an attractive one. However, it is Rebecca Schneider’s 2011 commentary on Taylor, which is most telling:

We may say that Taylor is less concerned with the inter(in)animation of the live and the archived (though she notes it) than she is in rescuing performance for archival account. That is she works to situate the repertoire as another kind of archive rather than emphasizing the archive as another kind of performance. (Schneider 2011: 108)

It is this argument that will provide a discursive framework for my own practice as

research: an understanding of archive as living performance and performance as living archive, in turn echoing performance studies scholar André Lepecki's (2010) formulation of the moving 'body as archive.' I am interested in how choreographic performance in the archaeological museum offers fluid, porous temporalities, as performing archive past, performing archive present and archive still becoming.

Le Musée de la danse

I would like now to situate these ideas in the particular context of what we might term the 'Dancing Museum' (*Le Musée de la danse*), to use French choreographer Boris Charmatz' (b. 1973) coinage.²⁷ The recent special issue of *Dance Research Journal* 46:3 'Dance in the Museum' (2014), edited by dance and performance scholars Mark Franko and André Lepecki, has picked up on this trend, giving some valuable examinations of the moving, dancing body as archive. As Franko and Lepecki point out in their editorial to this collection, although dance in the museum is not new, it is 'the scale, prevalence, and consistency in presenting dance in [...] museums across the planet [which] suggest that something else is taking place right now' (Franko and Lepecki 2014: 4). The special issue aims to qualify this 'something else', marking a time in the development of practice of dance in the museum towards the idea of the 'Dancing Museum'. This 'Dancing Museum', envisioned by choreographer Boris Charmatz, is held up as a flagship case study and used as a connecting thread within the special issue. However, it is the special issue's

²⁷ Charmatz renamed the *Centre Chorégraphique National de Rennes et de Bretagne* as 'Musée de la danse' (see Charmatz, 2014). The widely used English translation is an interesting one, as the French also offers the choice of 'The Museum of Dance' as well as the more active 'Dancing Museum'. The term is used by Charmatz for his performative interventions in art museum spaces e.g. at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2013) and Tate Modern, London (2015), but it has now been espoused by other dance projects in museum spaces, such as the pan-European 'Dancing Museums' project (2015-2017) and now even exists as a social media hashtag to designate any dance performance or activity occurring in a museum.

overall focus on temporality, highlighting how essential an element this is to what is currently taking place in the ‘Dancing Museum’, rather than any specific focus on Charmatz, that lays the foundations for my own wider research project, where I aim to further interrogate these questions of temporality in the ‘Dancing Museum’ beyond Charmatz.²⁸

I wish first to look to philosopher Franz Anton Cramer’s paper, ‘Experience as Artefact: Transformations of the Immaterial’, where he points to the body’s potential to ‘transform experience into artefact’ (Cramer 2014b: 29). Cramer here picks up on his thinking in another earlier paper, ‘La Scène et le Musée: une dynamique contemporaine’ (Cramer 2014a), published in *Critique d’art* just prior to the *Dance Research Journal*’s special issue. It is useful to trace the development of Cramer’s thought over the course of both. In the earlier article, Cramer argues for experience over object, whereas in the later article, he argues much more interestingly for experience as artefact, which we might also term experience-as-object. Essential to his argument is the articulation of body as the site of this transformation. Similarly, art historian Marcella Lista in her paper, ‘Play Dead: Dance, Museums and the “Time-Based Arts”’ (2014), also investigates the notion of the dancing body as the site of transformation of experience into artefact within the ‘Dancing Museum’, and observes that the question of how choreographic practice engages with exhibit(ion) acts as a basis to probing further questions of dance heritage. Lista here refers to work

²⁸ It is important to note here that due to the particular background of the authors, the cultural and geographical focus of the *DRJ* special issue is shared mainly between high-profile institutions in the US and in France, and as such, the four selected papers focus on a relatively small pool of examples of dance in the museum. This may be considered a potential bias. Moreover, the special issue was published before Charmatz’ project came to the UK (*If Tate Modern was a Musée de la danse?* May 2015, Tate Modern, London) and so, in terms of my own research, there are further sources to consider to develop the debate in terms of the UK manifestation of the project, e.g. the UK aspect of the pan-European *Dancing Museums* project (www.dancingmuseums.com) which will be further discussed in chapter four of this thesis (p. 94ff).

by choreographers Jérôme Bel (b. 1964) and Richard Move, the latter in the context of Charmatz' 'Dancing Museum' at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York (2010-2013). These questions engage not only with the wider question of time – dance history itself – but also with the temporal configurations of the museum space. Lista probes the temporal shifts in the 'non-material museum' (Lista 2014: 9) that the 'Dancing Museum' brings about, where dance and art object are thrown into critical focus by their juxtaposition and/or interaction:

Against the representation of history created on museum walls, he [Charmatz] sets a bodily topography of memory, in which periods open onto each other, cross one another, collide, or freely avoid each other. (ibid: 12)

Lista is quick to observe that the non-material museum is sited within bodily space, focussing on what it means for the body to be the mobile site 'for a non-material museum [...] [for] the bodily articulation of fragments of history' (ibid: 9). This concept of body as 'non-material museum' is a useful juxtaposition with Cramer's views, but it could be argued that at the same time it seems to negate the potential of the museum as a different site for the dancing body to be in a positive relationship with the material museum, in favour of retaining the idea of the body as its own museum. This relationship between body as non-material archival object and the museum as house of material archival object warrants closer attention. It prompts me to ask exactly what happens when the non-material museum of the body is 'housed' within the material museum. As such, it opens onto a significant research question for my wider project.

In exploring the body as site of history, Lista adds another iteration to Andre Lepecki's notion of 'body as archive' (Lepecki 2010: 28). Using the same case study

as Lepecki, Richard Move's re-embodiment of Martha Graham's repertoire, Lista examines Move's work as 'living archive' in the context of its presentation in the first part of Charmatz' triptych at MoMA, *Musée de la danse: Three Collective Gestures*, within *20 Dancers for the XXth Century*, where it was significantly framed against artist Douglas Gordon (b. 1966)'s video installation *Play Dead; Real Time* (2013). In a nod to Gordon's title, Lista observes that an understanding of the body as archive throws up the wider question of the choreographer 'playing dead' when their work enters the museum space in 'real time' during their lifetime. Her example of the *tableaux vivants* by Spanish-Swiss choreographer La Ribot (b. 1962), and of the body as museal object on display, could be seen as relating back to Cramer's body as transformational site of experience into artefact.

Finally, in her paper 'OCCUPY MoMA: The (Risks and) Potentials of a *Musée de la danse!*' (2014), critic Alessandra Nicifero places a similar emphasis on the body as archival object. Observing the performative 'Dancing Museum' through the lens of philosopher Beth Lord's 2007 reading of Foucault's performing archaeology and a vision of the ideal twenty-first century museum as being one which organises objects in a discontinuous, atemporal series, Nicifero points immediately to the notable absence of the body in this vision. She reclaims the idea of body as archival object, in turn echoing Cramer and Lista:

How does the contemporary museum work when the 'exhibited objects' are bodies — breathing, moving, dancing, empathically interactive bodies — bodies that make their own connection with histories using their memory devices? (Nicifero 2014: 36)

Charmatz' *20 Dancers for the XXth Century* for Nicifero both becomes an example of Lord's ideal museum and surpasses it, for Charmatz' 'Dancing Museum' is 'peopled' with bodies; it is the body as 'living archive...as museum within a museum' (ibid: 38, citing the programme notes from 'Dancing Museum' at MoMA). It is important to acknowledge here for the wider debate that the inclusion of the body of the maker, and/or of visitor, with the art object (or artefact) is a recurring theme in the visual arts generally during the latter half of the twentieth century into the twenty-first century.

Articulating the body as living archive, as archival object in Charmatz's *Expo Zéro* and the 'counter-memory,' the alternative archive, of choreographer Merce Cunningham's works offered in *Flipbook*, Nicifero adds an important element to the debate asking:

What does "living archive" really mean? [...] Is it a living (as dancing bodies' "will to) archive" [Lepecki] or a living (as never ending access to) archive (collection of data)? (ibid: 39)

Picking up on Lepecki's idea of the will to archive as providing 'new' possibilities for 'old' work, Nicifero argues that Boris Charmatz' choreographic concern in the 'Dancing Museum' is also 'to project present gestures into [...] an archive-to-be' (ibid). The possibility of the museum becoming (through dance) a present where the historical past is explored and potential futures envisioned again raises the question of the capacity of the dancing body itself as a non-material museum archive, as a vehicle for shifting temporalities: simultaneously a filter for the past, an embodied present and a projected future.

This idea of simultaneous temporalities - artefactual ‘old’, embodied ‘new’ present and future (the archive to be) is an important one, and is reiterated by Franko and Lepecki:

As an archival site, the museum inspires dance to *emulate the artifactual quality of the archive while also transforming it—and itself—into a new version of the act*. (Franko and Lepecki 2014: 3, my emphasis)

I am interested in where choreographic performance in the museum both looks forward and looks back, offering fluid, porous temporalities as a performing archive past, a performing present and an archive still becoming. And, importantly, how are these shifting temporalities related to the ideas of both the body and the museum as spaces of memory, of remembering, and to the relationship between collection and re-collection?

Although such ideas are fundamental to a study of dance in the museum, and particularly to a study of temporality in the ‘Dancing Museum’, we can see that the archive - from Derrida (1995a; 1995b) onwards - is by now a much-traversed territory. I would like to suggest that the time has come to continue to move the archival debate forwards,²⁹ and that my own particular form of practice-as-research within the museum might provide a methodological means to achieve a new way of approaching the debate. This will be further picked up and developed in chapter five, where I argue for ‘performance as archive’ as a methodology for historical research.

In his recent paper, ‘The An-Archive of Contemporary Dance: Choreographic

²⁹ See also Bexte, Buehrer and Lauke (2015) on their 2012-2015 research project ‘The limits of the archive.’

Re- Enactment, or How to (Re-)Construe a Recalcitrant Past with Unstable Means?’ theatre and dance scholar Timmy De Laet (2016) follows on from Lepecki’s embodied modes of archiving and other recent theorisations of the archive in dance studies and beyond (Laermans and Gielen, 2007; Ernst, 2014) to propose the an-archive as a concept that posits how practices of re-enactment might lead to ‘a flexible, mutable archive that, contrary to traditional views on archival preservation, thrives on creative revisions’ (De Laet 2016: unpaginated). The an-archive thereby incorporates an ‘interaction’ (ibid) between materialised sources and intangible performance. De Laet’s use of the term interaction, echoing Schneider’s own reference to the ‘inter(in)animation of the live and the archived’ (2011:108), prompts me to consider that perhaps it is not so much the binary oppositions between materiality and immateriality, tangibility and intangibility, and the permanence of the archive and the ephemerality of the dance in the museum that should concern us, as much as the interactive quality of the an-archival space, and the gaps that might open up between these binaries. Might the dancing body in the museum then provide a space for those gaps – those slippages in temporalities - to appear?

Gaps, intervals, lacunae: a brief history

As I shall further argue in this thesis, live dance performance in the museum possesses the potential to articulate the gaps, the intervallic spaces, between temporalities. My thinking here expands two recent ideas – Rebecca Schneider’s theorizing on performance as ‘perhaps another word for the intervallic’ (Schneider 2016) and Georgina Guy’s idea of the ‘lacuna’ between the performed and displayed which may be ‘encountered anew and imagined through acts of theatre, exhibition and curation’ (Guy 2015: 184) in the museum. The live, dancing body in the museum

offers a space to allow for gaps or lacunae to appear, and thereby opens up a space for other stories, other histories, to surface. I am also drawn here to Heike Roms' (2016) work on performative methods of oral history and what she coins a 'historiodramaturgical' approach. This is akin to what we might also term 'performative historiography': re-do is not simply re-enactment, but in itself creates a different present so that other previously unrealized potential histories may be given form. This approach specifically serves my research questions about the moving body as potential counter-archival 'object' in the museum, and whether its presence might allow a new visibility for those female bodies previously rendered invisible by history. By investigating and critiquing ideas of the logic of the museum (or archival) space as arguably patrilineal (as well as west-identified and white-cultural, as Schneider [2001, 2011] argues), I ask how the introduction of the moving, dancing female body in the museum allows certain buried histories to surface and be 're-collected.' My argument is that the dancing body can exploit the gaps between temporalities to allow for previously unrealized histories to surface; and claim a new space for the live, female body in the museum, and therefore in history.

Speaking recently on dance in the museum, dance scholar Gabriele Brandstetter points to how that which she terms the 'museum in transition' (2016: unpaginated) can serve as a cultural model for restructuring 'traditional' categories of narrative. She evokes the 'historeme', the anecdotal, the unpublished (or the not-yet-published) as opposed to the *grand récit*, and uses dance in the museum (citing re-doings of postmodern dance history in the museum such as those in Charmatz' 'Dancing Museum') as an example of how performance might offer a challenge to

critical historiography. For while traditional historiography tells history with a beginning, middle and end, performance in the museum, precisely because of its fragmentary nature, offers an opportunity for the anecdotal, the not yet published, to be displayed. This idea of the anecdotal as ‘not-yet-published’ may be equated to Roms’ idea of those unrealized potentials. To run with the very fitting archaeological metaphor of fragments, such thinking leads me to posit that it is the fragments themselves (as well as the gaps between the fragments) and the process of reassembling those fragments through performance that is of import to my own project.

The Dancer in the Museum³⁰

As I have argued elsewhere (Crawley, 2017), the wider framework for this analysis develops from a reading of Brandstetter’s seminal work, *Tanz-Lektüren: Körperbilder und Raumfiguren der Avantgarde* ([1995] published in English in 2015 as *Poetics of Dance*), a historiographical approach to early twentieth-century modernism across dance, literature and the visual arts. Brandstetter’s use of art historian Aby Warburg’s iconographic concepts of *pathos formula* and *topos formula* (as outlined in his *Mnemosyne Atlas*) constitutes a methodological proposal for ‘reading’ the interaction between modernist dance, literature and visual culture. Interestingly, Brandstetter’s wide-ranging study begins with an analysis of the dancer in the museum of art history almost *avant la lettre*, exploring the work of Isadora Duncan (1877/8-1927), Genevieve Stebbins (1857-1934) and Alexander Sakharoff (1866-1963) within ‘the hall of statues’ (2015: 63). In such a way, this study allows

³⁰ Some of the material in the following section has previously been published in *Performance Paradigm* 13 (cf. Crawley 2017).

me to trace a lineage for the dancer in the archaeological museum and to situate my own project within the larger historiographical context.

Brandstetter's analysis of what the modern dancer was doing in the museum - one example being Isadora Duncan in the galleries of ancient art and antiquity at both the Louvre and the British Museum - is an extremely important one:

The dancer in the museum: this formula describes not only the physical act of appropriating images from the archives of cultural history, but also the process of transforming the museal representations of works of art into the moving presentations of dance. In other words, the dancer not only goes to the museum to study works of antiquity as visual models for his or her performances but is also there – where they have been archived – in order to revive them as figures of dance in contemporary memory. (2015 [1995]: 63-4)

Brandstetter here reminds us that modern dance is born from the archives of classical antiquity – and that modern dance's pursuit of the new is impossible without the visual archives of antiquity. The modern dancer enters and explores the museum as 'a storehouse of images' (ibid: 41) but in transforming these images (or pathos formulas) into movement, the modern dancer is able to introduce a new dimension to early twentieth-century dance, 'the realm of historicism as an active, interpretative act of referencing art history on the one hand and as a reflective recourse to the traditions of dance history on the other' (ibid). Brandstetter's conclusion is a neat one: dance only becomes truly modern because of this development. The interaction between temporalities is thus highlighted: in the work of the modern dancer, there is a clear relationship between the archived images and the ephemeral modern dance (we remember here that one of the defining features of modernism, at least according to the French poet Baudelaire in his 1863 essay 'Le Peintre de la vie moderne', is its

ephemerality³¹) almost a century before Peggy Phelan (1993), Diana Taylor (2003), Rebecca Schneider (2001, 2011) *et al* call up the binaries of permanent archive and ephemeral performance.

A further point made by Brandstetter is the relationship between the modern dancer and the subject of *memoria*, the question of preserving cultural memory: the modern dancer places herself in the archive of works of antiquity in order to ‘revive them [...] in contemporary memory’ (2015 [1995]: 64, my emphasis).³² Brandstetter employs two models for a broader investigation of *memoria* and the translations of pathos formulas across ancient art and modern dance: Aby Warburg’s *Mnemosyne Atlas* and Hugo von Hofmannsthal’s essay ‘Moments in Greece’ (1908), which Brandstetter defines as another ‘Mnemosyne’ project.³³ However, as I have recently discussed,

[...] these models differ considerably. While Warburg attempted to assemble a large-scale inventory of pathos formulas and their translations in art history since antiquity, Hofmannsthal suspended the idea of the archive altogether. In terms of my own project, it is not the differences between the models that draw my attention but the point at which they collide, despite their differences. Most notably, Brandstetter’s reading of both Warburg and Hoffmannsthal in fact begins to explore the notion of what might be termed ‘the in-between’, as each articulates the experience of how temporality shifts and morphs in both the museum and in the body (and, more specifically, in the body in the museum – although the body in this instance is a non-dancing, spectating one). (Crawley 2017: 73)

In the second part of Hoffmannsthal’s essay, ‘Moments in Greece,’ entitled ‘The Wanderer’ where the traveller figure meets a homeless ‘wanderer’ and seeks to

³¹ ‘La modernité, c’est le transitoire, le fugitif, le contingent’ [Modernism is the transitory, the fleeting, the contingent] (Baudelaire 1976: 355, my translation)

³² There is, of course, the salient point that by choosing to perform in the museums of ancient art and archaeology – the eighteenth and nineteenth century temples to art built by the educated upper middle classes as monuments to art and culture – modern dancers ensured that modern dance acquired a certain ‘status’ on a par with other art-forms.

³³ It is perhaps useful to recall here that in classical Greek thought, Mnemosyne, Memory, is the mother of the Muses – and the Museum, in its most basic definition, is the *shrine* to the Muses.

decipher his face and body, the focus, according to Brandstetter's formulation, lies on 'reading the traces and cracks of history - as signs of *memoria* and the origins of the subject - in the human landscape of the body' (2015 [1995]: 74). Here what is significant is the relationship made between the 'cracks' of history and the body. Furthermore, Hoffmansthal goes on to describe the traveller's experience of temporality in the museum: an experience of pure presence, of time as *déjà vu*, of encounter with the self, and of interconnectedness, 'of being interwoven' between subject and object (cf. Hoffmansthal 2008: 97-98). This latter point is significant: Hoffmansthal bases his art theory on a relationship between an artwork and its beholder, and on the dynamic play of movement between the two. For Brandstetter, it is this idea that leads directly to dance in the museum where 'the moving body becomes the eye of the observer' (2015 [1995]: 84). In his own diary, Aby Warburg also describes the dialogical relationship between observer/dancer and artwork/archive, articulating it as 'the iconography of the space in-between' (see Gombrich 1984: 343). So, while Warburg's focus is on the reconstruction of the archive and Hoffmansthal's on its deconstruction, it is the ideas both have about the 'cracks of history' and the 'spaces in-between' that are of interest to my own choreographic project in the museum.

These 'cracks of history' and 'spaces in-between' can also be related to ideas of the gap, the lacuna, and the intervallic. Such ideas are being widely investigated and teased out in the fields of dance and performance studies, and at this juncture I can only offer a very brief overview of the vast current thinking in terms of where it takes my own project. I wish to start with Jeff Friedman's 'Minding the Gap: The Choreographer as Hyper-Historian in Oral History-based Performance' (2015), which

re-focuses and extends Freddie Rokem's conceptualization of the 'actor as hyper-historian' (Rokem 2000: 13) to the choreographer³⁴ and, to some extent, mirrors Roms' work on oral history as performative historiography. Although Friedman uses an oral-history based choreographic project as a case study (choreographer Paula Rosolen (b. 1983)'s work *Die Farce de Suche: Ein Solo von und über Renate Schottelius* [*A Farcical Search: A Solo for and from Renate Schottelius*], 2010) and my own choreographic and performance practice is of course distinct from this type of oral-history based performance project, some of his insights are illuminating for the purposes of my own project, most particularly in his understanding of the choreographer's ability to investigate the gap between the past and the present. Friedman defines Rosolen's work as a performance of 'meta-history' (Friedman 2015: 58),³⁵ arguing that it uses choreography 'to comment critically on the dialectics of time-based experience in history and about history in live, embodied performance' (ibid) and to point out the gap between the archive and the orally / kinaesthetically constructed personal history of the dancer and choreographer, Renate Schottelius. Friedman explains that Rosolen exploits the gaps in-between by staging so-called 'failures' where the received understanding of the past does not match with the choreographic moments of the present. For Friedman, it is through her choreography that Rosolen is able to point out the gap between embodied memories in the present and the mythologized historical representation of Schottellius. For example,

³⁴ Rokem highlights how 'the hyper-historian [the actor] must strengthen or reinforce the dialectics among multiple time registers' (Rokem 2000: 19) in order to provide the connecting link between the historical past and the 'fictional' performed here and now of the performance event. Friedman is not the only dance scholar to extend the term hyper-historian to the dancer – dancer and dance scholar Maria Salgado Llopis also describes 'the notion of the hyper-historian as helpful because it establishes the idea of the dancer as a connecting link between past and present in performance [...]. In a way, the performer enacts a kind of 'palimpsest history' when performing a dance-work, and by doing so, dancing itself effectively becomes and embodiment of history [Dean *et al.* 2015: 5]' (Salgado Llopis 2017: 63).

³⁵ The term is an interesting one: this 'meta-history' seems to recall a Lyotardian meta-narrative when I would argue that Friedman here in fact means the very opposite of Lyotard's (1979) term.

Schotellius has been ‘frozen’ in the archive as a proponent of German expressionism, even though in fact she principally learned and disseminated Cunningham and Limon techniques in her teaching in Buenos Aires. The archival imperative is to keep Schotellius in German Expressionist mode for its own purposes, but Rosolen’s work points out the fallacy inherent in it. At one point in the piece, in order to reveal the gap between historical data and living memory, Rosolen has the solo performer learn and then mimic movements performed by one oral history narrator who describes Schottellius’ teaching pedagogy: the staging incorporates both the video data on-screen and the live dancer trying to perform the same movements in real time. This moment points up the ‘failure’ of the received archive in startlingly physical terms. It subverts theatrical conventions to shock the audience into a hyper-historical awareness. Furthermore, by subverting choreographic conventions, Rosolen emphasises how the body can subvert archival narratives. This latter point is an important one.

Friedman’s argument of course owes much to the well-documented binary between the archive and the repertoire pointed out by Taylor (see above, p.31) and he references Taylor several times during his argument. In fact, it sometimes seems that Friedman is a little too reliant on Taylor’s binary. When Friedman continued his thinking about how Rosolen’s work ‘minds the gap’ in a 2016 presentation of his research as part of the Dance Studies Colloquium series at Boyer College of Dance and Music, Temple University (USA),³⁶ this reliance on Taylor was evident, and the argument seemed to ignore Schneider’s (2011) developments of Taylor’s thinking. In the ensuing seminar discussion, fellow dance scholar Mark Franko pointed out that

³⁶ The presentation and seminar took place on 27th September 2016.

the archive / repertoire distinction is essentially flawed, principally due to its emphasis on a strictly modernist temporality. Franko himself argued that the idea of the temporal turn in itself does not take into account theories of history from the last twenty years, particularly the very contemporary idea of presentism, where every present moment is both immediately historicised and is self-historising itself (which may explain our anxiety over material culture). Franko then suggested that what makes the archive special is, following Schneider, that which remains - the relic - and so it is primarily spatial, not temporal. Franko here reminds us that Schneider's 'performance remains' is both a verb and a noun: it is material and therefore cannot do without spatiality. Are we then to consider the 'gap' not in fact a temporal one but a spatial gap where we actually let go of temporality? Franko's question in response to Friedman is a challenging one, but one that I feel compelled to question in turn. For is not the separation of time and space a false one? I am thinking here of Elliott Jaques' *The Form of Time* (1982) and how the division between space and time is a false division; perhaps these two intertwined elements should be thought of more in terms of a continuum than a binary division. This leads me to another question, and hopefully not too reductive a one: how are space and time interwoven? Echoing Brandstetter's analysis of the pathos formulas of Warburg, I would like to suggest here that it is gesture that can bridge the spatio-temporal gap.

In her 2014 essay 'Lithic Liveness and Agential Theatricality' (developed in her keynote at PSi Melbourne in 2016), Rebecca Schneider refers to Paleolithic art and to the gesture of the hand as hail, asking if we might use it to think about 'the duration of gesture and the intervals between gesture's reiterations' (2014: 1). Three terms are important here – duration, gesture, and interval – which in turn point out the

interrelationships at work between space, time and the body. Such interrelationships are integral to any understanding of the dancer in the archaeological museum.

Schneider's emphasis is on the hail as a gestural call that is extremely useful because 'it preserves a temporal interval, a space for difference' (ibid: 2). If the times between 'call and response' (ibid: 9) are highlighted by gesture, might gestural performance then be a substitute for the intervallic? Is the gesturing body a site of potentiality for the intervallic between time and space? Such thinking about gesture leads us directly back to Warburg's *Mnemosyne* project and the model of how the modern dancer used the gestures encountered in the pathos formulas of antiquity to create a 'new' dance.³⁷ It follows that the next question for my project is how I, as a choreographer and dancer, myself use gesture – both encountered and performed in the archaeological museum - to exploit the intervallic?

A further layer for my own project is one that is articulated by Georgina Guy (2015) in her idea of the 'lacuna' between the curated and the performed. My argument is that in the museum, I am both curating and performing dance movement [gestures]; and dance movements [gestures] are being curated, exhibited and performed. Significantly, Guy's chosen term, 'lacuna', points to an idea of missing pieces. I think here of one of Brandstetter's chosen pathos formulas – Nike of Samothrace, the winged statue in the Louvre, goddess of victory and the 'allegory of history progressing, appear[ing] in dance as the pathos formula of modernity *per se*'

³⁷ Interestingly, Siobhan Davies Dance's 2016 exhibition project *Notes on Gesture*, conceived by artist Jeremy Millar and considering the status of a gesture, and the 2017 performance work *material / rearranged / to / be* (which has so far been performed in gallery settings at the Barbican, London, UK; the Whitworth Gallery, Manchester, UK and the Blue Coat, Liverpool, UK), draw upon Warburg's idea of the recurrence of certain gestures in different times and different places, and combines Warburg's ideas on bodily communication with the latest ideas from neuroscience to explore how movement is both felt and observed.

(2015 [1995]: 124). Nike of Samothrace is a personification of time itself yet a fragmentary one, for she is a headless torso. I think too of an early performance with Avid for Ovid that took place in the Ashmolean Museum in 2015 (immediately preceding the PhD project) where I myself danced beneath a plaster cast replica of the same winged Nike: perhaps then choreography as exhibit in the archaeological museum is more a story of fragmentary replicas?



Fig. 2: Cast replica of a winged Nike, Cast Gallery, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Photograph: author's own.

Assembling All the Fragments: Current Museum Practice

I would now like to situate my own research project within the wider context of current museum practice. More specifically, I wish to interrogate concepts of materiality and immateriality as related to museum practice. There appear to be two important yet somewhat diverging strands to current approaches in this area. First is the important shift towards the material in museum studies, as exemplified by social and material anthropologist Sandra Dudley's key text *Museum Materialities: Objects, Engagements, Interpretations* (2010), which I will further discuss below. Of interest to my own project is how the 'increasing immaterialisation of the art object' (Cramer 2014a: 1) in time-based performance art in the museum sits within this shift towards the material. Equally, in terms of my own research, Dudley's edited collection prompts me to ask to what extent we might consider the dancing body within the museum a material object in its own right. Is the choreographic solely immaterial or is the body in the museum an archival, material 'object' among other curated, collected objects? The second strand, clearly developed by Helen Rees Leahy, Professor of Museology, in her book *Museum Bodies: The Politics and Practices of Visiting and Viewing* (2012), explores the embodied museum, and the diverse choreographies of the museum itself in terms of the spectator walking, viewing and interacting with art objects. While Rees Leahy's emphasis is on the spectating body as choreographed 'object' within the museum, in terms of my own study, I ask if the performing body in the museum may also be defined as yet another choreographed 'object'; I am thinking here of performing body as (intentional) performer rather than the 'accidental' performer in the museum (spectator). Such key questions of course revolve around, and depend on, the assumption of the body as either immaterial or material object. Or, as Cramer suggests, ought we now to be looking beyond the either / or, beyond 'the

presumed ontological difference between the art object and the choreographic opus’ (Cramer 2014a: 12)?

I turn first to Dudley’s significant text, *Museum Materialities* (2010), which looks at how objects and people mutually interact in the museum space and examines the particular qualities of the museum as a context for person-object engagements and interactions. This text, written by an anthropologist formerly of Oxford’s Pitt Rivers Museum, marks a clear shift in museum studies and as such is a valuable and original addition to the existing literature in the discipline. For while phenomenological and other approaches to embodied experience in a material world have been current within many other disciplines (the ‘material turn’ as Edwards and Hart term it [2004: 3]), Dudley’s is the first text to apply this sort of approach to museum collections and interactions with the collections by museum visitors, artists and researchers. Along with other recent studies on object handling in the museum by Chatterjee (2008) and Pye (2007), what is being looked at here is the museum in terms of materiality and tactility rather than of cultural, anthropological research, and this is a significant development. Dudley builds on the idea of the ‘sensual revolution’ (Howes, 2005), moving away from the structuralist and post-structuralist dominance of language and the later pre-eminence of vision and ocularity in the museum to focus on the mutual interaction between people and things, and especially ‘the particular qualities of the museum as a context for person-object engagements, and the active and embodied role of the museum visitor’ (Dudley 2010: 2). Dudley’s emphasis on the interaction of body with object sheds some new and interesting light in terms of my own research, if we are to take the body as material object, and although she is working from an anthropological perspective, she points towards some interesting ways for the dance

researcher investigating the choreographic within the museum. If the dancing body in the museum is considered an object, how might we define the ‘Dancing Museum’ as a context for person-object and person-person engagements?

Dudley’s collection highlights the current move away from the value of objects being reliant on their cultural meanings and provenance to ‘physical, real-time, sensory [or embodied, my term] engagements’ (Dudley 2010: 6). We see a shift from value based on historical lineage to value based on the present and sensory encounter. What should be equally of interest is not only cognitive engagement with the museum object, but haptic and, especially important for my study, kinaesthetic engagement. Two papers in Dudley’s collection are particularly apposite for my own research because of their focus on physical, bodily participative engagement in the museum, whether that engagement be by the artist or the spectator: namely, curator Helen Pheby’s ‘Contemporary Art: An immaterial practice?’ and Helen Rees Leahy’s ‘Watch your step: Embodiment and encounter at Tate Modern.’ While Pheby takes the problematic of the immateriality of time-based artwork within a context of materiality as her focus, Rees Leahy, who has published widely on the visitor’s embodied encounter with the museum, makes an important contribution to the understanding of what we mean by the embodied museum. Rees Leahy develops her arguments much more extensively in her 2012 book, *Museum Bodies*, where she grounds the embodied museum in terms of the historical practices of collecting, curating and viewing from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries onwards and demonstrates how the embodied spectator exists within museum practices today. Especially interesting for my own research is Rees Leahy’s chapter ‘Performing Bodies’, which echoes the earlier 2010 article ‘Watch your step’ from Dudley’s book,

and takes Tate Modern (UK) as a central case study. Manuel Pelmus and Alexandra Pirici's work *Public Collection* (2016) at Tate Modern, and Pablo Bronstein's *Historical Dances in an Antique Setting* (2016) at Tate Britain (one of Tate Modern's sister institutions³⁸) are two of my own case studies (see chapter four of this thesis), and so Rees Leahy's observations about Tate make an interesting place to start - although as a unique case study and an example of a large-scale institution, there are clear, if justifiable, biases to her argument. It is also worth noting that while the material turn and embodiment has become a 'hot topic' in museum studies, there is currently far less literature on the (im)materiality of the *performing* body within the museum. This is an area where my own research project may be able to significantly build on the current research.

Dudley makes the key point that the traditional museal process of selection and curation has always served to demonstrate museums as being primarily ocular-centric, as 'a way of seeing in their own right' (Dudley 2010: 8 cf. Alpers, 1991; Crimp, 1993), yet further evidence of the dominant visual paradigm in the modern Western world (Levin, 1993; Crary, 2000). As museum studies scholar Susan Pearce points out in the preface to Dudley's text, 'the culture of modernism depended on the notion of evidence, selected elements of the physical world, which could be assembled in a chosen order so that the viewer could see laid out before his (as it usually was) very eyes the vision of the truth which the objects embodied. The prime location for this activity was, of course, the museum display' (Dudley 2010: xv). The displays at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford are an example of such 'traditional' museal practice: indeed, might we now consider the Pitt Rivers to be a museum of a

³⁸ Tate comprises four art museums in London, Liverpool and Cornwall (UK), known as Tate Britain, Tate Modern, Tate Liverpool and Tate St. Ives.

museum?³⁹ Yet, as several scholars (Classen, 1995; Classen and Howes, 2006) have demonstrated, museum practice has not always been dominated by the visual paradigm: further back still, *wunderkammern* (cabinets of curiosities) enabled a full, active, sensory engagement with objects. Today, Dudley argues, educational object handling practices notwithstanding,⁴⁰ contemporary museal display practice remains primarily visual rather than material. The museum remains a ‘don’t touch’ place (Dudley 2010: 11) where conservational concerns mean that preserving artefacts for the future is more important than interacting with them in the present.⁴¹ At this juncture, Dudley asks a significant question:

To what extent do [conventional approaches to the public display of objects] enable our own, *performative* engagements with real, three-dimensional things?’ (2010: 10, my emphasis)

Dudley’s choice of the term ‘performative’, borrowed from Judith Butler (1993),⁴² is significant and is a term Rees Leahy also takes up and expands upon. Rees Leahy discusses how the museum operates through what Judith Butler terms a series of ‘performatives’ [museum mores] which make the body both legible and manageable (1993) e.g. ‘Don’t touch!’ Yet our experiences tells us that:

our [...] bodies frequently rebuke the museum’s performatives [...] Sometimes our resistance is more purposive; [...] the *performances* of visitors

³⁹ The Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, a sister teaching museum to the Ashmolean, displays archaeological and ethnographical objects from across the globe. The museum was founded in 1884 by Augustus Pitt Rivers who was an ethnologist and archaeologist noted for his innovations in archaeological methodology and in the museum display of archaeological and ethnological collections. Whereas in most ethnographic and archaeological museum, objects are arranged according to geographical or cultural location, the Pitt Rivers collection is organized by type. The museum is renowned for these typological displays that deliberately cross cultures and temporalities. The Pitt Rivers has become the site for various performance events, although have been mostly sonic, and so challenge the privileging of the visual encounter in the museum.

⁴⁰ Where touch enables a corporeal encounter and ‘bodies seems to be linked to bodies through the materiality of the object they have shared’ (Classen and Howes 2006: 200).

⁴¹ My own choreographic practice questioned this ‘don’t touch’ paradigm in tongue-in-cheek fashion when I entitled the first of four works I created in 2014 to be performed within Robert Therrien’s sculptures as part of a Tate / ARTIST ROOMS exhibit as *Please Do Not Touch*.

⁴² cf. Dorothea von Hantelmann’s tracing of the term *performative*’s original usage to J. L. Austin’s philosophy and then later in the works of both Jacques Derrida and Judith Butler (von Hantelmann 2010: 17).

may simultaneously engage with museological spaces and objects while resisting the prescriptive institutional *performative*. (Rees Leahy 2010: 163)

For Rees Leahy, what emerges is the idea of the visitor as a performer within a museum exhibition. Her paper in Dudley's collection analyses the museum visitor's acquisition of bodily techniques (cf. Mauss, 1973) in order to navigate the physical and social space of the museum exhibit, with specific reference to space-body relations at Tate Modern and the 'repertoire of visitors' performances that have been staged there' (Rees Leahy 2010: 164). Rees Leahy's language is highly significant: she consistently uses metaphors of performance in relation to the museum visitor's embodied experience of the exhibit – 'repertoire', 'performance', 'staging'. Furthermore, in *Museum Bodies*, this type of language is equally prevalent and extends to dance-specific metaphors: Rees Leahy discusses the 'choreographed sociality' of the museum (Rees Leahy 2012: 2), describes how 'walking choreographs visibility within the museum' (ibid: 75), and alludes to 'the familiar choreography of viewing' (ibid: 100). Rees Leahy's focus is on how the museum visitor's experience of an exhibit is in essence choreographic, a performance: essentially, the museum 'choreographs' the visitor. Yet, moving on from Rees Leahy's argument, we must remember that the spectator's is not the only embodied encounter in the museum. In the 'Dancing Museum', we are also witness to the choreographer's, and the performer's, own embodied encounters.

Rees Leahy takes the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall as a space where the triad of body-artwork-space 'has been interrogated and re-staged' (Rees Leahy 2010: 166) and consistently elicits the visitor's physical, rather than visual, engagement. Continuing performance scholar Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett's concept of a performing museology and her important observation that all museums in some way

activate proprioception (1999), while also referring to Merleau-Ponty's 1964

formulations, Rees Leahy describes how:

In the Turbine Hall, proprioception is overtly sensational, in both meanings of the word. In Merleau-Ponty's terms, this performance of perception is an ontological process that occurs at the intertwining (or chiasm) of the body and the world, or more specifically, at *the intersection of the visitor's embodied subjectivity and the materiality of the museum* (ibid: 167, my emphasis).

To illustrate her important observation, Rees Leahy takes the example of Olafur Eliasson's 2003 installation, *The Weather Project* (which is, incidentally, also cited by Helen Pheby in her paper in this same collection), where, by use of the overhead mirrors, spectators saw and moved their bodies in rotational symmetry either individually or collectively to form stars and snowflakes, while other visitors beholding the event from viewing platforms created an audience for this 'performance.' What is most important here is not only the choreographic element of the spectator's embodied encounter, but the fact that the choreography was a social and collective experience. Indeed, the moment was later described by Andrew Marr as one when 'contemporary art folded into mass experience' (Marr 2006: 14). A similar 'mass experience' occurred in the same site as part of Tate Modern's 'Dancing Museum' in 2015: the Turbine Hall housed a public warm-up, as well as several of Boris Charmatz' major choreographic works: *A bras-le-corps* (1993) *Roman Photo* (2009), *manger* (2014) and *Levée des conflits* (2010). Presentations of Charmatz's work were interwoven with the teaching of elements of the choreography to the audience. The Turbine Hall also became a dance floor complete with disco ball, open to all, whereby the dancing spectator became very much involved in a collective choreography. These examples – admittedly with a clear bias because they concern the same museum space – are interesting because they point to a shift between the traditionally individual (one on one) experience of viewing a piece of artwork in the

museum and a new experience of viewing and physically experiencing an artwork in a collectively embodied encounter while still sited within the museum.⁴³ The space of contemporary art practice taking ‘as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context’ (Bourriaud 2002: 14) is a tenet of relational aesthetics in which today’s art-experiencing public are well versed,⁴⁴ but in terms of the ‘Dancing Museum’, and my own research project, the continuous shift between the individual and collective experience warrants much more detailed attention. Indeed, it would be interesting to look beyond the initial clear bias of this one case study and examine what is happening beyond Tate Modern and the Turbine Hall. It would be equally interesting to witness how collective embodied encounters have been affected by the opening in June 2016 of the Tate Modern’s newest building, the Switch House, a ten-storey gallery rising above The Tanks (the museum’s permanent galleries for performance art which opened in 2012). Catherine Wood, Senior Curator of International Art (Performance) at Tate Modern, recently described performance in relation to this new building very much in terms of the collective experience of contemporary museum visiting:

In more and more ways our world is about this act of showing oneself. The idea of performance has become more and more pertinent. Performance will be integrated into the new museum in a new way that will, I think, profoundly change the way that people encounter this kind of work [...] With this new building, we’re really thinking differently about what the museum is and what the museum can be, not just as a collection of objects but actually as a space for people and that includes the visitors as much as the artist and it’s a community or a conversation. (Tate 2015: unpaginated)

⁴³ This is related to something touched upon by Dorothea von Hantelmann in a series of public vignettes at Art Basel in 2014: in an exhibition, the crowd is not addressed as a crowd but as a number of individuals. This marks a difference from the theatre and the ‘anonymous’ collective and points to a more individualized and therefore more democratic experience.

⁴⁴ Rees Leahy uses the example of Robert Morris’ 1971 retrospective at the Tate and its ‘re-do’ at Tate Modern, *Bodyspacemotionthings*, as an interesting example to show how far museum visitors have become aware of themselves as public ‘performers’ in the field of relational aesthetics: ‘Transposed into the art playground of the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern, *Bodyspacemotionthings* [re-do] was re-staged as family entertainment: the risk of the original was erased...’ (Rees Leahy 2012: 105)

As sociologist Gaynor Bagnall puts it, the museum audience is always ‘performatively attuned to the spectacle of the performance of others’ (Bagnall 2003: 94-5) because of the duality of looking / being looked at in the museum space; now, according to Wood, performance involves both the artist and the museum visitor in a communal experience of ‘showing oneself’ and seeing oneself showing oneself. Might this be the definition of the early twenty-first century art museum, a museum for the Instagram generation?

While Rees Leahy examines the embodied encounter of the museum visitor, there are of course other bodies to consider. Helen Pheby’s paper provides sharp relief to Rees Leahy’s investigations in that she considers the place of the body of the artist in all this, turning to what she describes as ‘the complexities of the physical and non-physical means through which contemporary artists choose to create artworks’ (Pheby 2010: 80). She turns in particular to time-based art, appropriate to my own study of the choreographic in the museum and its inherent notions of shifting temporalities, where we might argue that ‘event’ displaces art object. However, I believe that object is not entirely displaced: rather, it is the body of the artist (or of the dancer) that becomes the art object, the medium of the work. Curator Michael Rush cites pioneer of performance art Joan Jonas (b. 1936) alluding to this notion in 1995 as she evokes her early work:

I was in [the performance pieces] *like a piece of material or an object* that moved very stiffly, like a puppet or a figure in a medieval painting. I didn’t exist as Joan Jonas, an individual “I”, only as a presence, as part of the picture. (Rush 2005: 42, my emphasis)

Considering the body as material or art object is an important layer to add to my investigations. Pheby’s paper draws out the important point that, when defining conceptual art - arguably a fore-runner to time-based performance art - art theorist

Lucy Lippard considers that ‘the idea is paramount and the material form is secondary, lightweight, cheap, unpretentious and/or ‘dematerialised’ (Lippard 2001: vii). Lippard concedes that it has often been pointed out to her that dematerialisation is an inaccurate term, as a photograph – or, as I would argue, a dancing body - is as much an art object or a ‘material’ as lead or pigment. However, Lippard continues to use the term dematerialisation - ‘or a de-emphasis on material aspects (uniqueness, permanence)’ (Lippard 2001: 5) - to describe artwork using ‘such ephemeral materials as time itself, space’ (ibid). Lippard might well be describing the choreographic in the museum – a form using time and space as media – and yet I find her term ‘dematerialisation’ misleading. The dancing body in the museum is not necessarily dematerialised at all. It may be considered a material object and the interest lies in how it is positioned alongside other archival objects in the museum; indeed, the dancing body may be considered archival in itself, rather than ‘just’ the site of the ephemeral performance. Klare Scarborough’s 2010 essay ‘Authenticity and Object Relations in Contemporary Performance Art’ (also published in Dudley’s collection) seeks to investigate issues of authenticity, movement and absence in trying to exhibit performance art – ‘or at least, its traces’ (Dudley 2010: 14). There are always, inevitably, traces of the dancing body left, even after the dance has ended - as with any museum collection, it is fragments that remain. I will return to how dance operates in practice in the art museum in chapter four, but before then I wish to outline the methodological frameworks of this thesis and the notion of the importance of ‘curatorial thinking’ through practice-as-research.

3. Terpsichore's Question: Philosophising Dance?

Introduction: 'Curatorial Thinking'

The nature of this research project requires a research paradigm that responds well to its wide-ranging inter-disciplinarity, one that is multi-dimensional, generative, evolving, emergent and continually responsive to process. In this project, there is not one truth to be discovered, but a multiplicity of co-existing and interconnecting interpretations to be uncovered, and so the research paradigm used for this thesis can be broadly identified as post-positivist (rather than positivist i.e. deterministic, predictable, and requiring an empirical, deductive approach). Taking a post-positivist approach is an appropriate one for my study, as it allows 'a perspective that recognises the complex, non-linear, multi-dimensional and interactive nature of the areas of [the] enquiry' (Fraleigh and Hanstein 1999: 81). To use theorist of artistic research Henk Slager's term – and one very apposite to a study of dance in the museum – this approach can also be generally thought of as 'curatorial thinking' (Slager 2016). It is interested not in predictable outcomes, but in a field of possibilities emerging from speculative interconnections and processes linking objects, processes, histories, discourses and forms of address. Broadly speaking, my thinking here is fluid and functions in a multiplicity of inter-connections, oscillating constantly between disciplinary knowledge production and a boundless process of artistic experimentation. More specifically, in this research project, my researcher perspective continually shifts between the positions of academic, choreographer and dancer. Stemming from my own instinctive ontological perspective, this post-positivist epistemology is, necessarily, intrinsically connected to my methodology

and, therefore, to the research methods I use⁴⁵ (necessitating, for example, qualitative rather than quantitative research methods). As will be further outlined in this chapter, this thesis adopts a collective methodology of a critical analysis review, based on an integration of hermeneutic phenomenology and feminist inquiry, and a practice-as-research approach. Indeed, I argue not only for practice-as-research as a part of my collective methodology, but also for how that might drive a related concept of what I term ‘performance-as-archive’. One springboard for this is my own practice-as-research, which aims to interrogate contemporary performance as ‘living’, moving archive for the ancient Roman dance form *tragoedia saltata*. For this project, where fully embodied and ‘present’ performance acts as a filter for past texts and past forms, and where a moving body becomes quite literally a living archive for an ancient, ‘dead’ choreographic form, it is indeed possible for the dancing body to simultaneously filter the past *and* embody the present? Can the dancing body actually be an alternative archive? If it can, what else does it reveal – to both theoretical research and to practice-as-research?

As I have outlined in the *Introduction* and chapter two, ideas of temporality, materiality and the female body form a departure point for my initial research questions, and so I am drawn to a methodological framework that integrates philosophical enquiry – hermeneutic phenomenology, after French philosopher Paul Ricœur’s explorations of time and narrative (1983, 1984, 1985, 2004) - and a feminist critical analysis, in relation to a reinterpretation of ‘gaze theory’ as outlined by classical scholars. These two philosophical frameworks act as two parallel lines of

⁴⁵ While epistemology is concerned with the philosophy of knowing, methodology concerns the practice of how we come to that knowing (and is focused on the practical approaches, or methods, that we use to come to knowledge).

enquiry in my thinking and in my practice, sometimes overlapping, sometimes running alongside each other. Both have an overarching influence on the practice-as-research element, as well as forming the core of the critical analysis through a literature and practice review (chapters two and four respectively).

Hermeneutic phenomenology: after Ricœur

Hermeneutic phenomenology,⁴⁶ the first of my chosen frameworks, stems from my own instinctive ontological perspective yet, as an intrinsically reflective approach, is one ‘particularly well suited to dance phenomena’ (Fraleigh and Hanstein 1999: 163). It is also one appropriate to my research questions which focus on an exploration of lived existentials of time and the body. For German philosopher Martin Heidegger, an early proponent of the interpretation theory of hermeneutics, being is a temporal experience, and questions of interpretation are always inextricably linked to the past, present and future of the temporality of that comprehension. Likewise, existence is always to be understood from a temporal and historical position, and what Joanna McNamara terms the ‘hermeneutic phenomenological dialectic circle of interpretation’ (Fraleigh and Hanstein 1999: 167) *per se* comprises a conversation with the multiple social, cultural and historical ways of knowing a phenomenon. It therefore seems a fitting epistemology for temporal explorations of the phenomenon of the dancing body in an archival setting. French philosopher Paul Ricœur builds on Heidegger’s hermeneutics in his explorations of intra-temporality, and the complex relationships between time (*le temps*) and narrative (*le récit*) cf. Ricœur 1983, 1984, 1985, 1991, 2004.

⁴⁶ This framework links the interpretation theory of hermeneutics (cf. Martin Heidegger’s *Dasein* – to exist is to interpret) with phenomenology.

My argument hinges not only on Ricœur's seminal writings on time and narrative from the early 1980s but also on his later writing, *History Memory Forgetting* (2004). In the introduction to this magisterial study (which was published at the end of the philosopher's career, only a year before his death), Ricœur himself looks back on his earlier writings, noting a gaping hole in his theory on time and narrative. The missing element is memory and remembrance (and, by extension, forgetting). Ricœur's project is to address this question of memory and offer an in-depth and complex theory of memory and history, tracing the path of the mnemonic - 'from memories to reflective memory, passing by way of recollection' (Ricœur 2004: 4) - alongside the path of the historical and the imaginative. A salient point for Ricœur is how, with history, 'everything starts, not from the archives, but from testimony' (Ricœur 2004: 147). I am intrigued by the connection that Ricœur makes between memorial as recollection (or, as I might term it given my museum context, *re-collection*) and testimony, which chimes with my idea of the importance of the witnessing of classical heroines through my dance performance in the museum (see chapters seven and eight of this thesis). For Ricœur, something is always lost in the writing of history:

Historians work with documents, and a document is already a rupture with memory, since it is written and since the voices have already turned silent (Ricœur 2005: 11-12)

We see again the inevitable gap; the rupture with memory. Ricœur then goes on to address how when history moves from testimony to archive, the texts become 'orphan texts' (Ricœur 2004: 168-9), detached from their author. In the archive, they have no interlocutor, no audience; as testimony, as witness statements, they once did. Once memory comes into play, the orphan texts seem to once more move out of the fixed archive and back into the realm of testimony. This is how we can begin to account

for history's wrongs (in terms of a witness telling an account of an event). Returning to themes explored in the earlier *Time and Narrative* (1983, 1984, 1985), Ricœur then turns to fictional and historical narratives. While one approaches history with a critical, cautious eye, one is willing, with fictional accounts, to suspend disbelief. This difference in expectation does not negate the fact that fiction and history are both narrative forms involving both plot and character and, as such, he makes a case for a plausible narrative form needing space, time, context and character. In other words, representation is achieved by making history 'visible.' Citing the notion of Aristotle's *opsis* as outlined in his *Poetics*, Ricœur reiterates how the ability of a historical narrative to be created 'before our eyes' is crucial to its persuasiveness (Ricœur 2004: 263⁴⁷). Ricœur's thinking here supports my practice in the museum. For, in my dance practice, although I am ostensibly dealing with 'fictionalised' historical narratives (and I think that Ricœur would not contend with this idea of fictive history), I am representing quite literally, before the gaze - Aristotle's *opsis* - of the spectator-visitor, the rupture with memory between the written, textual source (Ovid) and the silent, mute voices of the heroines within that source that become my dancing heroines in *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* (Myrrha, Philomela, 'Galatea' and Medusa).

Interestingly, performance studies scholar Baz Kershaw (2011) situates Ricœur's argument in terms of museum theatre. Referring to Phelan (1993), Taylor (2003), Auslander (2008) and Schneider (2009), Kershaw suggests how:

[...] dominant approaches to ephemerality in performance theory have drawn a strict line between events past and present: once gone – or disappeared – there is no retrieving their most crucial qualities, most tellingly defined metonymically as 'live' or 'liveness' [...]. However, from Ricœur's perspective, this view of the 'live' treats museum and heritage site materials as

⁴⁷ See also Ricœur's fn. 49 (2004: 559-560) for a recapitulation of his conclusions reached in *Time and Narrative*.

subject to a ‘pathological deficiency’ (Ricœur 2004: 21). This affliction tends to collapse mnemonic phenomena into a unitary state defined by the *unreliability* of remembering [...] and, paradoxically, this implies that memory works uniformly on all parts of the past as traces in the present. But historical ‘common sense,’ of course, indicates otherwise. Everything is not equally ephemeral. Some things are not remembered, and sometimes their records retained as a prompt to continuing testimony, more fully than others. (Kershaw 2011: 126)

Kershaw’s ‘degrees of ephemerality’ and how memory is thus triggered by them in ‘a relatively unpredictable, contradictory and *disordered* manner’ (Kershaw 2011: 129, original emphasis) is an important one. The idea of the disorder and dislocation of memory again point to the notion of the fragmentary where, as Kershaw puts it, ‘some things are not remembered’ and some remembered ‘more fully than others.’

This hermeneutic phenomenological framework is by its very nature a flexible paradigm, allowing for a constantly evolving understanding of meaning, rather than adhering to one rigid and fixed method. Enquiry is constantly emergent and intuitive. It is a subjective approach where, as Valerie Malhotra Bentz describes, ‘the premises, perceptions and judgements of the researcher / writer are not falsely ‘hidden’ [...] but clarified [...] interwoven through the research process’ (Malhotra Bentz 1989: 2). This inherent subjectivity, where the personal viewpoints, prejudices and potential biases of the research-interpreter are recognised and indeed central to the inquiry, is one of the framework’s strengths but it may of course also be considered a weakness. As such a researcher-interpreter, I must constantly reflect on both my own lived experiences and prejudices and the wider sociocultural and historical contexts of the phenomenon under investigation. If I am able to achieve these things simultaneously,

remaining constantly aware of my positioning in the wider context throughout the study⁴⁸, the framework can be a very useful one for researching dance phenomena:

In its ability to accommodate the aesthetic, sociocultural and historical contexts of a work – and the personal viewpoints and biases of the interpreter – it is a method particularly well suited for the interpretation of new and changing dance forms. (Fraleigh and Hanstein 1999: 172)

The hermeneutic phenomenological framework can be applied to my opening research questions and is in turn aligned with certain research methods and how I gather experiential and qualitative data exploring the wider dance in the museum phenomenon. An understanding of my own position relative to the wider aesthetic, sociocultural and historical contexts necessitates not only a critical analysis review of the written discourse of certain historians and philosophers such as Ricœur, but also open-ended, loosely structured interviews from an admittedly small range of choreographers and curators working in dance in the museum (these might be termed as select case studies and are investigated more fully in the next chapter⁴⁹), videos of recent dance works made for museum spaces, rehearsal notes, a literature and practice review and so on. These various methods of ‘data collection’ allow me to build a bigger picture of my interpretation of the phenomenon and enable me to begin to situate my own practice and understanding in a wider sociocultural and historical context. Furthermore, it may be argued that a hermeneutic phenomenological approach goes hand in hand with a practice-as-research approach, and with that ‘curatorial thinking’ evoked by Slager (2016). I do not start with a preconceived

⁴⁸ Madison (1998) provides a useful checklist – ‘coherence, comprehensiveness, penetration, thoroughness, appropriateness, contextuality, agreement, suggestiveness and potential’ (Madison 1998: 29-30) – against which one might evaluate a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology.

⁴⁹ Select practice case studies concentrate on the dancing body in the museum, specifically in the museum of art and / or archaeology e.g. Pablo Bronstein’s *Historical Dances in an Antique Setting* (Tate Britain, UK, 2016), Manuel Pelmus and Alexandra Pirici’s *Public Collection* (Tate Modern, UK, 2016) and the pan-European ‘Dancing Museums’ project, specifically its research residencies at the National Gallery, UK, and the Louvre, France (see further chapter four of this thesis). I am aware that these case studies are relatively limited and small in scope (UK and continental Europe) but they help gain an awareness of what is currently happening in the wider context of dance in the museum.

hypothesis and set out to demonstrate a phenomenon, according to a somewhat predetermined view, but aim to constantly interpret the phenomenon, with such interpretations continually shifting and evolving, in turn opening up new possibilities. It is an experiential and multi-dimensional process, where many meanings can and do emerge, not only in the critical analysis itself, but also flowing from that analysis into the choreographic practice-as-research (and *vice versa*). Both hermeneutic phenomenology and practice-as-research are methodologies which favour the experiential, the intuitive and the suggestive.

Feminist Critical Enquiry

Parallel to the hermeneutic phenomenological framework and also feeding into the practice-as-research is a feminist critical enquiry. This approach specifically serves my research questions about the moving body as potential counter-archival ‘object’ in the museum, and whether its presence might allow a new visibility for those female bodies previously rendered invisible by history. By investigating and critiquing ideas of the logic of the museum (or archival) space as arguably patrilineal (as well as west-identified and white-cultural, as Schneider [2001, 2011] argues), I ask how the introduction of the moving, dancing female body in the museum might allow certain buried histories to surface and be ‘re-collected.’ I use this frame as somewhat of a provocation for an investigation to be explored not only through critical discourse but also predominantly through practice-as-research, in the creation of new choreographic work for a museum of ancient art and archaeology. I envisage that this practice-as-research will build on my re-imaginings of the ancient Roman dance form, *tragoedia saltata*, in order to test the potential of the dancing body as a site of counter-archive and counter-memory and of a surfacing of ‘buried’ female

histories. It also uses the dancing body as museum exhibit to subvert the idea of the female body as archival object historically subjected to the 'gaze', to use Laura Mulvey's (1975) term, of the male collector. The theory of the 'male gaze' in both the classics and dance studies fields is well-trodden territory and, as far back as 1991, Ann Daly denounced it as 'tiresome' (Daly 1991: 2), but it is still extremely useful, particularly I would argue in the context of the museum, itself an arena that stages different relationships of viewing and spectating. As Helen Thomas points out (cf. Thomas 1996; 2003), despite its limitations, Mulvey's theory was, and, I would argue, continues to remain useful to feminist analysis because it offers itself as a model for 'understanding the association and objectification of women through their bodies and their lack of cultural power within the discourses of patriarchy' (Thomas 1996: 73). It seems particularly useful when we think about a performance practice in the history or archaeology museum - that 'seat' of cultural and patrilineal power - where a female dancer's body is deliberately put on display for all eyes to see, and where the curatorial practice of display is subverted by replacing an inanimate object with a live, dancing body that shifts through time and space. French feminist Luce Irigaray writes of the moment when 'the look dominates' as being the moment when 'the body loses its materiality' (Irigaray cited in Owens 1985: 70); in response to Irigaray, I would argue that my choreographic practice in the museum seeks to highlight this moment when the visual dominates as being the very moment when the body's materiality (as another layer of the museum's 'material culture') is thrown into sharp relief. That moment becomes the subversive one, where objectified woman rises up and metaphorically smashes through the glass of her display case to dance her own story in and through her own body. I articulate these provocations as starting-points to be

interrogated through practice-as-research, whilst aware of the ever-shifting nature of practice-as-research to inform and provoke further questions.

Practice-as-research

Baz Kershaw (in Kershaw and Nicholson, 2011) has identified how practice-as-research methodologies in the UK may be traced back to the widespread ‘practice turn’ across many disciplines from 1960s onwards, which was characterised by a ‘post-binary commitment to activity (rather than structure), process (rather than fixity), action (rather than representation), collectiveness (rather than individualism) [and] reflexivity (rather than self-consciousness)’ (Kershaw and Nicholson 2011: 64). Kershaw also notes how practice-as-research in theatre and performance studies grew significantly around the world from the early 1990s onwards, with many UK practitioner-researchers being recognised as pioneers in the field. 2009 marked an important year in the development of practice-as-research in the UK, Australia and the USA, with the publication of three collections focussing on the emerging methodology’s purposes and approaches: Allegue *et al.*, Riley and Hunter, and Smith and Dean. The variation in terminology that these key collections employ, namely practice-as-research, performance as research, practice-led research, along with other variations in wide use (e.g. practice-based research, practice-led research, performance-as-research) demonstrate the extensive range of definitions that this methodology has acquired to date.⁵⁰ My own thesis adopts a fairly simple one: practice-as-research here means employing the creative processes of choreographing and performing as research methods.

⁵⁰ For a very up-to-date discussion and unpicking of these terms in relation to performance-as-research as a methodology, see Arlander *et al.* (2017).

To frame this discussion of practice-as-research, I wish to start with four questions:

- When is practice research? Is there a difference between practice and doing?
- How / when does practice become a methodology? Or a method?
- How does the practice of doing research feature in the research itself?
- How will documenting my practice feed my research?

As I navigate both what a practice-as-research methodology might mean and what that methodology's relationship to research methods might be, I have come to realise that negotiations between practice and critical thinking form a *mise-en-abyme* of much wider questions of 'creative archival research' posed by Maggie Gale and Ann Featherstone (in Smith and Dean 2010: 17). These wider questions are encountered headlong in this research project, which has at its heart an investigation of the body as an alternative site of knowledge and memory. It thus seems entirely appropriate to employ a choreographic practice-as-research methodology⁵¹ in this study.

Practice-as-research is a reflective, iterative and emergent methodology that also corresponds to the general characteristics of my hermeneutic phenomenological framework. Barbara Bolt describes the sort of knowledge attained through practice-as-research as 'a very specific sort of knowing, a knowing that arises through handling of materials in practice' (Bolt 2007: 29), a 'praxical knowledge' (ibid: 34) relating back to Heidegger, but I prefer Kershaw's description of practice-as-research engendering not a knowing, but a 'radical *dis-location* of ways of knowing' (Smith

⁵¹ Where choreographic practice becomes a principal activity of the research process.

and Dean 2009: 107, my emphasis)⁵². For me, this connects to Henk Slager's 'curatorial thinking,' which I have alluded to above. Slager (2016) claims a space in practice-as-research for the *impossibility* of knowing, for experimentation and speculation, for a field of possibilities linking objects, processes, histories, discourses and, potentially, forms of address too. Slager's 'curatorial thinking' is an awareness of all these emerging interconnections as they occur and shift throughout the research process. This recognition of the impossibility of knowing relates to the process of hermeneutic phenomenological enquiry: multiple truths may be approached, but one truth is never fully grasped or attained. Rather than arriving at one, true interpretation through an objective methodology, the researcher-interpreter 'instead shares the value of understanding the essence of the subject itself through various settings' (Fraleigh and Hanstein 1999: 183) and various configurations. In order to address the potential methodological problems of practice-as-research – of which I have needed to be aware in my research design - certain defining characteristics of the methodology must first be outlined: i) that it is emergent and ii) that it is reflexive.

As Brad Haseman writes, the artist-researcher 'commence[s] practising to see what arises' (Haseman 2006: 100). I enter the studio armed with certain research questions informed by my critical enquiry but I leave space for those initial questions to crystallise, clarify, and shift, and for new questions to emerge which, in their turn, will inform the critical analysis, and so the cycle will continue. Critical theory and

⁵² See also Kershaw and Nicholson (2011: 84): 'A key component in the 'practice turn' [...] has been a vertiginous traverse between discursive and embodied ways of becoming / being, doing epistemologies and becoming ontologies [...] Practice as research in theatre / performance studies increasingly has aimed to rest, as it were, on the point of that turning. One major sign of the criticality of that conundrum is "the foundational problem of where knowledge is located" (Piccini and Rye in Allegue *et al.* 2009: 36) and that indicates a *profound principle of practice as research in theatre and performance: that its methods always involve the dislocation of knowledge itself* (Kershaw and Nicholson 2011: 84, my emphasis). From this framework, two questions emerge: where might intuition be located within this 'dislocation of knowledge' (cf. Smith and Dean 2009: 76), and might intuition also be related to Michael Polanyi's (1958) ideas of the tacit knowledge of the practitioner?

studio / performance practice are interwoven and iterative, functioning in a constant feedback loop. As choreographer-researcher, I must have a constant awareness of and sensitivity to the concept of knowledge as unstable, ever shifting and multidimensional. I must be aware too that this interplay of theory and practice works best when it is intertwined as one whole; as Bolt succinctly puts it, ‘theorising out of practice is [...] a very different way of thinking than applying theory to practice’ (Bolt 2007:33). Practice-as-research is more than applied theory: it must work in both directions. For me, the method is truly working when the practice raises new questions and informs the critical theory, as well as the theory informing the practice. This constant looping has led some theorists to argue that practice-as-research is situated in the in-between; it is an inter-being, much like Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizome (1987).⁵³ However, I prefer to think of it temporally-speaking as something constantly ‘becoming,’ ever evolving, shifting and emergent: a mode of knowing and unknowing, a field for the ‘impossibility’ of knowing. This zone of ‘becoming’ also allows for those elements of desirable (and undesirable) surprise to emerge, elements which Stephen Scrivener, influenced by Donald Schön (1983), describes as moments of ‘the unprecedented in creative practice’ (Scrivener 2016: unpaginated).

Coupled with the state of emergence that characterises practice-as-research is that which Haseman and Mafe define as its ‘complexity’ (Smith and Dean 2009: 218). This complexity, from which findings of practice-based research are generated, may be related to the fact that it is multidisciplinary, emerging from contrasting registers of creative practice and academic research. Things are further complicated by the fact that, as Graeme Sullivan (2006) suggests, in a postmodern, multidisciplinary context,

⁵³ ‘A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 25).

the interpretation of the creative work is itself extremely complex, built from an underlying tension between understanding and affect. This may have epistemological implications for the study and the wider field as well. Therefore, identifying these issues of emergence and complexity are crucial to understanding and managing practice-as-research:

[...] It should be noted that these dynamics are not completely absent from other research approaches. The difference, however, lies in the degree of intensity of these forces in unsettling and shaping the research project as a whole. For the creative practitioner, emergence and reflexivity are much more than distracting variables in the research that need controlling. Instead they are both foundational and constituting, operating at practically every level of research, and it is this that makes it [...] difficult, messy... (Smith and Dean 2009: 218)

The ‘messy’ nature of practice-as-research must be embraced and managed, and reflexivity is central to negotiating such complexity (or messiness).

Moreover, in practice-as-research, the artist-researcher adopts the dual roles of researcher and researched. I am wary of using a term such as auto-ethnography in defining this reflexive process, as I feel that it is not quite the correct term, but I am aware that I am simultaneously subject/object of my research. As such, I must ensure that this subjectivity does not compromise the validity of my own research. Rather, I must boldly embrace and champion the value of the subjectivity of my study, as indeed my hermeneutic phenomenological perspective would assert. It may be argued that the deeply emergent, ambiguous wildness of practice as research can be ‘tamed’ through a heightened sense of reflexivity. How to achieve this? There needs to be a constant sense of shift constructed into the research design to allow the artist-researcher i) a place where she can be fully within the practice and ii) another place from which she can view and reflect on the practice, where she can ‘be alert to the

larger patterns emerging in the work, engage in theory building and claim significance for the work' (Haseman and Mafe in Smith and Dean 2009: 222). Using these shifting and distancing/focussing mechanisms, a triangulation between the practice itself, the critical contexts in which the practice locates itself and the wider research practice is needed. This heightened reflexivity can be approached through constantly questioning the practice whilst simultaneously trying to locate it in a broader field. Again, this echoes the hermeneutic phenomenological process whereby one's own position in relation to the phenomenon (the research questions) is constantly under interpretation, whilst the wider sociocultural and aesthetic context is recognised and valued.

Charting a reflexive process in the studio has included the use of a choreographic journal to record 'continually asking questions' (Tufnell and Crickmay, 1993: 200) and therefore provides another source of 'data,' woven throughout this thesis in the form of rehearsal notes that give space to the voice of practice. This leads me onto what is perhaps the most difficult methodological problem of practice as research, and that is how to navigate the relationship between the practice as artefact and the documentation of that practice. How can the practice be documented: through photography, video footage of live work, choreographic scores, rehearsal notes, written reflections during studio practice, or a combination of all of these? In thinking about this issue, I am struck by Baz Kershaw's discussions of the unfair unwariness of documentation that the field seems to have, following Peggy Phelan's famous comments on performance's ontology being its disappearance (1993), and the connection that he makes between documentation and memory, or rather documentation as 'a form of memorialisation' (Kershaw and Nicholson 2011:

164). Kershaw's thoughts on this connection echo Simon Ellis's (2005) suggestion that perhaps 'documentation' is the wrong term for it and that we should substitute 'remembering' for 'documenting'. Again, such a discussion points up the *mise-en-abyme* of such questions within my own research topic. If my thesis itself depends on the concept of the primacy of the moving body as its own documentation, with the performing body as its own archive, should I too be wary of a 'traditional' documentation of my own practice? Yet, to fulfil the requirements of a PhD, this thesis has to include documentation, archival evidence of a choreographic practice. Perhaps, for this project, this seems paradoxical. To resolve this paradox, Kershaw and Ellis' concepts of documentation as leading to, or indeed being a mnemonic process, speak to me. If we think of documentation as remembrance, within the documentation and recall process there is arguably something still happening, still mobile, still potentially in flux, and still leaving room for Scrivener's 'unprecedented'. Alys Longley, in her recent presentation 'Loops, notes, folds and fragments – experimenting / documenting / dancing' (2015),⁵⁴ also speaks of an 'experimental documentation' as a means of translating a practice. Longley evokes what she terms a 'fragmentary thinking' in documenting choreographic work, a 'translated memory' of a practice. Again, significantly, the word 'memory' comes into play. In the act of documenting or remembering a practice, however fragmented, the practice (the choreography) remains somehow fluid and mobile, becoming translated into another practice (the documented image or word). The practice is still shifting. In this thesis, the memories of the practice continue to shift between the written word (the poetic voice, gathered from studio and rehearsal 'field-notes'),

⁵⁴ I am here citing Alys Longley's presentation of her research at the Centre for Dance Research (CDaRE), Coventry University, 21st October 2015.

photographic images and even the accompanying video documentation, itself a ghost copy of the choreography performed live.⁵⁵

The heart of the matter is too, I think, to embed some of the playfulness, fluidity and mobility of the practice into this written exegesis (what might be termed the ‘document’⁵⁶). In terms of the written document, it is worth pointing out here that writing itself is of course a practice too. How then do I navigate choreographing (which is, of course, ‘writing dance’) and writing as practices that co-exist? Niki Pollard, cited in Conibere (2015: 13), suggests that ‘retrospective written discussion might not so much reveal a practice as enable it to ‘continue to think’ (Lee and Pollard 2010: 24). Again, this idea of practice being an ongoing process and ‘continuing to think’ through written documentation strikes me as useful one. Through the written and the documented, the practice is still evolving, still operating in that zone of ‘becoming’ evoked above. Furthermore, writing is an embodied practice, one that dances alongside choreographing. In the studio, I have reflected and written as part of my practice and, as I have noted above, the voice that has emerged is a very different one from the voice of the academic critical theorist. How then to ensure that the voice of practice, the voice of process, is present in the written exegesis? How to embrace the multiplicity of voices in a written documentation of practice-as-research? These are challenges I have faced, and to address them, I have

⁵⁵ It is important to state here that the accompanying video documentation of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* was recorded in the Ashmolean on April 23rd 2018. This was a day on which the museum was closed to the general public and so while the video acts as a ‘memory’ of the dance practice as it was performed in the museum, it is not a memory of an actual public performance. Certain choices were made on that day by both myself and the video team doing the recording, such as the decision to keep to the idea of an ultra-objectification of the dancer watched through the camera lens, maintaining ‘a frame within the frame’ (the dancer framed by the glass framed by the camera lens), rather than a subversion of ultra-objectification that the live performance hoped to encourage in the viewer. It is important too to bear in mind that this video ‘memory’ of the practice is not an art object in and of itself. That would be another artistic research project.

⁵⁶ I am aware here that there needs to be a clear distinction made between processes of documentation (documenting the practice) and the document (the written exegesis, reflecting on the practice).

chosen to employ different voices in this written exegesis, placing critical discussion side by side with the ‘looser’ voice of practice, articulating in another ‘poetic’ register more fragmentary thoughts from choreographic notes and reflections, what one might term ‘studio field notes.’⁵⁷

This multiplicity of voices corresponds to the multiplicity of viewpoints that my research design aims to encourage. My research paradigm is one that is emergent, iterative, suggestive, playful and complex. With a collective methodology of critical analysis, based on an integration of hermeneutic phenomenological enquiry and feminist critique, feeding into a practice-as-research approach, I use a range of experiential research methods that are in direct alignment with my research questions. Throughout my research process, I aim to maintain a thorough awareness of my own subjectivity (my viewpoints and biases) along with a wide-ranging and lively discernment of the wider sociocultural, aesthetic and historical contexts of my research topic, and a keen sense of that heightened reflexivity necessitated by practice-as-research. Using a range of appropriate methods, the research itself will be multi-dimensional, generative, evolving, and continually responsive to process. As such, it echoes the concept of ‘curatorial thinking,’ interested not in predictable outcomes, but in a field of possibilities emerging from experiential and speculative interconnections. Bearing this in mind, the following chapter looks to the first of the many strands of the curatorial thinking underpinning this thesis, and that is an examination of the wider picture of dance practice in the art museum in the UK today.

⁵⁷ There may also be interest in probing how performative writing co-exists with, or may even contain, a more critical voice – I am here following in the ‘tradition’ of Fiona Wright (2005) and Goat Island (2004-5) in exploring how writing (as document) can be an alternative form to other visual documentation (or memorialisation).

4. Dancing out of the Theatre and into the Museum

Introduction

This chapter takes a broader look at the field of practice of dance in the museum in the UK today. As I have pointed out in previous chapters (see *Introduction*, p. 7 and chapter two, p. 29), dance in the museum is currently a widespread phenomenon, at least in the UK and continental Europe, but it is not by any means a new one. Before going any further, it is crucial - at least in terms of this thesis - to make clear the distinction between dance in the art museum and dance in the history and archaeology museum. For these two very different types of museum raise very different questions in terms of what happens when Terpsichore attempts to enter them, although, as will be discussed, there are, inevitably, certain interconnections. Dependent on the type of institution, the stakes change: the status of dance in the 'white cube' space of the modern art museum may be very different from that in the archaeology or history museum, for example. An overview of current discussions concerning the new, twenty-first century wave of dance in the museum confirms that these differences are rarely addressed; the term 'Dancing Museum' (which, as I pointed out in chapter two, p. 32 fn. 27, is French choreographer Boris Charmatz' coinage but is now also being used as an umbrella term to cover a myriad of dance practices in museum settings), is very often being applied in one breath to both the gallery and the museum.⁵⁸ At this juncture, it is also useful to state once more that while dance in the art museum seems to be enjoying exponential growth, dance in the museum of ancient history and archaeology seems a rare phenomenon, at least in

⁵⁸ The title of Sara Wookey's very useful 2015 collection of interviews of curators and choreographers, *Who cares? Dance in the Gallery and Museum*, is indicative of this trend.

the UK.⁵⁹ Chapter two addressed the role of the museum in terms of how it helped shape modernist dance. The aim of this chapter is to interrogate what dance in the art museum is doing today, and whether an answer to this might help with the wider question of why we dance in the archaeological museum. However, before taking a closer look at what dance is doing today in the art museum, it is useful to briefly outline some historical connections between dance and the visual arts.

Dance and the Visual Arts

Dance and the visual arts have enjoyed a reciprocal relationship since the early twentieth century when theatre impresario Serge Diaghilev's (1872-1929) work with the Ballets Russes revolutionised the arts, as it brought together composers, visual artists and choreographers together to create a theatrical *Gesamkunstwerk*. The Ballets Russes productions exerted considerable influence on cultural activity throughout the twentieth century and continue to do so today. This new, collaborative method of dance and performance making between choreographers and visual artists developed throughout the mid twentieth century, particularly in the USA; notably the American choreographer Martha Graham (1894-1991) working with the sculptor Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988), and choreographer Merce Cunningham (1919-2009) collaborating with

⁵⁹ In the USA, however, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art has recently appointed a choreographer in residence, Andrea Miller / Gallim Dance who as the 2017-8 MetLiveArts Artist in Residence premiered a new site-specific work, *Stone Skipping*, at the reconstructed Temple of Dendur in the museum's Sackler Wing in October 2017. The Temple of Dendur has previously been a site for dance, and significantly the Martha Graham Company performed *Frescoes* at its opening in 1978. What draws me to Miller's work is her appreciation of this particular museum as a site of history: 'I'm focused on bringing embodiment into a space that is defined by materials, objects and artefacts. These are all masterpieces of our art *and of our history*; but nevertheless the living body isn't present as a representative of our history [...] I feel like we're [Gallim Dance] representing this deep part of our culture – art – and searching for meaning' (Miller interviewed in Cates 2017: unpaginated, my emphasis).

artists such as Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008) and Bruce Nauman (b. 1941). The lines between the visual arts, live art, performance and dance became increasingly blurred, as the post-modern dance movement took up the baton, importantly outside the *theatre* context. Allen Kaprow's (1927-2006) happenings in the 1960s and the collaborative performances created by dancers and artists working at New York's Judson Church and beyond (works by Trisha Brown [1936-2017], Simone Forti [b. 1935] and Yvonne Rainer [b. 1934], for example) set a new precedent for these partnerships and collaborations to move outside the theatre space and into gallery and art museum settings.

These lines continue to blur, shift and dance today. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, a host of choreographers embraced the visual arts – from Siobhan Davies (b. 1950) and Rosemary Butcher (1947-2016) in the UK, to Boris Charmatz (b. 1973) and William Forsythe (b. 1949) in France and Germany respectively. In addition, artists such as Tacita Dean (b. 1965), Pablo Bronstein (b. 1977), La Ribot (b. 1962), Xavier LeRoy (b. 1963) and Tino Sehgal (b. 1976) continue to 'exhibit' choreographic work throughout the UK and Europe today.⁶⁰ In broader terms, in the UK, performance (and here I am using the term to include both live art and dance) in the art museum has become an important topic. In particular, performance has been, and continues to be, of particular concern to Tate Modern (London, UK), which has been offering a space for performance art since 2003.

Championed by Senior Curator of International Art (Performance), Catherine Wood,

⁶⁰ I cannot hope to survey the whole field here – and indeed the aim of this thesis is not to do so – but I would point the reader to Stephanie Rosenthal's 2011 edited collection, *Move. Choreographing You: Art and Dance since the 1960s*, which was produced to accompany an exhibition she curated at the Hayward Gallery, London (13th October 2010-9th January 2011), and which highlights the richness of the crosscurrents flowing between the visual arts and choreography since the 1960s.

Tate has embarked upon a series of research programmes and exhibitions highlighting performance: these have included the BMW Tate Live programme and perhaps most significantly, the inauguration of a performance space, the Tanks, a permanent gallery dedicated to performance and live art, and which has hosted performances by Belgian choreographer Anna Teresa de Keersmaecker (*Fase*, performed at the opening of the Tanks in July 2012) and Boris Charmatz (*Flipbook*, October 2012). Both these choreographers were invited back to Tate Modern to ‘exhibit’ further performances: Charmatz’ *Musée de la Danse / Dancing Museum* ‘took over’ the vast Turbine Hall (and other galleries) in 2015, and de Keersmaecker showed her choreographic exhibition, *Work/Travail/Arbeid*, in the Turbine in 2016. Tate has also highlighted performance through its two-year research project, ‘Performance at Tate; Collecting, Archiving and Sharing Performance and the Performative’ (October 2014-September 2016), and through the online publication which culminated from it, *Performance at Tate: Into the Space of Art*, which explores the history of performance art at Tate from 1960s to 2016.⁶¹

Tate is not the only modern art museum to increasingly figure dance in its programming: from the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York to the Centre Pompidou in Paris to international art events such as the 2016 Biennale of Sydney (BoS20), dance is enjoying an increasingly visible presence championed by various curators. For example, the Artistic Director of the 2016 Biennale of Sydney was Stephanie Rosenthal, and she chose as her curatorial attachés Adrian Heathfield and André Lepecki, who have both been working at the intersection between dance and the visual arts for several years, along with curators as Mathieu Copeland, Pierre Bal

⁶¹ [Online] available from <<https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/performance-at-tate>> [29th August 2018]

Blanc, and the afore-mentioned Catherine Wood. Casting the net even wider, one can see that performance in the museum is a hot topic, and there is a growing body of work between theatre and museum scholarship: Claire Bishop (2012; 2014), Shannon Jackson (2011), Amelia Jones (1998; 2012) and Susan Bennett (2013), and more recently, Georgina Guy's 2016 *Theatre, Exhibition and Curation: Displayed and Performed*, which have all shaped the thinking in this thesis.⁶² However, despite the upsurge of interest in the wider field, I have consistently identified an important gap in both the literature and the practice, which are dominated by the modern and the contemporary. That gap is the place of dance in the history or archaeology museum, which is the focus of this thesis.

Dance in the Art History Museum: Three Case Studies

As a means of beginning to situate what might be helpful to take away from the wider field of practice in the UK for my own study of dance in the archaeological museum, I will now turn to three case studies of dance or choreographic practice that took place in art museums in the UK in 2016 – and, again, one can note the pivotal role Tate had to play here. These case studies are Pablo Bronstein's *Historical Dances in an Antique Setting* (Tate Britain, April-October 2016), Manuel Pelmus and Alexandra Pirici's *Public Collection* (Tate Modern, June-July 2016) and the National Gallery residency of the *Dancing Museums* project (National Gallery, November 2016). All three case studies took place in London, UK over the course of 2016, and were presented in three of the UK's major art institutions. As such, they highlight how some of the UK's most highly renowned art museums have recently been

⁶² In addition, there has been a recent prevalence of special issue journals on the topic (see chapter two, p. 30).

working with ‘dance’ and give a broad sense of what choreographic practice in the art museum in the UK looks like in 2016. In terms of my wider research project, while these case studies take place within art historical museum spaces rather than archaeological museum spaces (as my own project aims), looking at each case study in the light of the other two will enable me to chart the ways in which all three of these very different choreographic practices in the museum address questions of temporality, immateriality and materiality. Whilst each of the practices are very different, common questions arise; questions about what it means to reconstruct historical art objects, to re-imagine or re-contextualise them in another art-form, to ‘copy’ an original whilst making it a springboard for new and distinct work, and thereby to re-view a historical collection and perhaps even to reclaim, or to reimagine, history.

Historical Dances in an Antique Setting

Pablo Bronstein’s *Historical Dances in an Antique Setting* took place at Tate Britain between 26th April and 9th October 2016. It was one of a series of commissions to create site-specific work for Tate Britain’s Duveen galleries, and placed itself within the wider context of Tate’s interest in ‘Performing Architecture’. Bronstein’s work generally is characterised by an interest in pre-twentieth century European design and architecture, most specifically the baroque and the neo-classical, as well as in making performances that playfully, and sometimes almost satirically, fuse together historic and modern elements. The title of the Duveen commission alone highlights Bronstein’s interest in temporality and history, for these are ‘historical dances in an antique setting’.

In this continuous live performance, which ran during the museum's full opening hours everyday for almost six months, dancers moved through the galleries interacting with installed architectural elements. The piece took its broader inspiration from the neo-classical architecture of the Duveen galleries and Bronstein's interest in the baroque period. In terms of its use of a historical dance form (the baroque) and the playful re-imagining of that form into a twenty-first century performance in the art museum, of the three case studies explored here Bronstein's project seems to share the most common ground with my own investigations of the re-imagining of the ancient Roman dance form, *tragoedia saltata*, in the museum of ancient art and archaeology. As such, it provides a very useful lens through which to view how dance can playfully and effectively exploit shifting temporalities at work in the historical art (or, for the purposes of my study, the object-based historical / archaeological) museum. In addition, by having the work as not only durational – six hours every day – but happening over a period of six months, Bronstein also interrogates what the notion of 'permanence' might mean for a dance exhibit, and presents a challenge to the immateriality which dance's ephemerality presupposes. As such, it is a significant move away from models of event-based durational dance performance in the museum, and opens up interesting questions about what a permanent dance collection in the museum might look like. This is something I am interested in attempting in my own work for the archaeological museum – where performances are no longer event-based, but take place over a sustained period of time, unadvertised, and potentially 'permanently'⁶³ present for the museum visitor to encounter. The idea of a necessarily shifting exhibit – as both the choreography and the museum visitor's responses to it

⁶³ The term is in inverted commas here because of how tricky permanence is in this context. Notwithstanding the familiar argument about dance resisting any sense of stability (which is not quite the same as permanence, but is close to it), we might suppose that there are, what we might term, 'degrees of permanence' (an inversion of Baz Kershaw's 'degrees of ephemerality' [Kershaw 2011: 129]), even with 'static' objects.

will undoubtedly shift, evolve and develop – is an area that has been under-researched, and these shifts are of interest to me moving forwards with my own practice-as-research in the museum.

In terms of the architectural elements, Bronstein inserts two ‘fake’ *trompe-l’oeil* walls that face each other at either end of the galleries and that are both re-workings of Tate Britain’s existing external architecture. The colour of the walls seamlessly matches the original Tate walls and thus appears ‘real’. The wall at the south end of the Duveen is reworking of James Sterling’s early 1980s Clore extension and the wall at the galleries’ north end is a reworking of the neo-classical Millbank façade. The walls appear precisely detailed copies, but things are not quite as they seem: as painted shadows fall on painted columns, they are at odds with the way the real light falls in the galleries. There are also omissions – the statue of Britannia has been erased from the north façade, for example – and there are a number of new decorative details added. Bronstein is skilfully playing with the idea of what it might mean to copy an original. The details are as playfully false as the ‘walls’ themselves. As Bronstein himself explains:

What I wanted to do with these two façades was to do an inaccurate amalgamation of styles that loosely evokes Tate Britain as if it were being reconstructed five hundred years later. (Tate 2016a: unpaginated)

From Bronstein’s comments, we immediately have a sense of how the work is aiming to play with notions of reconstruction of historical art forms. The reconstruction is pushed further with the choreography itself. Within the walled galleries, a group of dancers forms an ever-shifting series of motifs and patterns as they make their way through the space, using a reconstructed baroque form, drawn from the 17th-century Italian concept of *sprezzatura*, which acts a foil to the more pedestrian movement of

the museum visitor. For Bronstein, the reconstructed baroque form thus provides something of ‘a parallel world’ (ibid). Its elegant and relaxed system of movement, which exists in remnants today in classical ballet, interests Bronstein precisely because of its artifice and artificiality (as artificial as the *trompe-l’oeil* façades), its theatricality and excess. Indeed, for the twenty-first century visitor, the highly refined, elaborate *sprezzatura*-inspired gestures may also be perceived as wry and ironic, and even as camp.⁶⁴

In considering this work, it is worth noting that this is not a precise reconstruction of baroque movement; even in its seeming precision, the choreography is as playful as the *trompe-l’oeil* façades that house it. According to Bronstein, the dancers

inhabit the architecture, inhabit the space, and they are users of the building or citizens or stand-ins for us. So they are a recreation as much as these add-on bits of architecture are recreations of the façades. And by recreations I mean that we are borrowing and grafting on a whole series of borrowed, extinct dance languages onto them which they will embody, learn and adapt accordingly. (Sotheby’s 2016: unpaginated)

This sense of ‘grafting’ choreographic languages on top of one another is important. The baroque movement language with its small jumps and ornamented, embellished gestures combines with elements drawn from other movement forms as diverse as

⁶⁴ As critic and dance writer Jann Parry described the work in a review for the online review magazine *Dance Tabs*, ‘[...] Bronstein’s dancers pose serenely, feet turned out and wrists tilted or curlicued, fingers fluttering. In the south gallery, they are proud and rather camp, voguing two against one or in unison as a trio’ (Parry 2016: unpaginated). Similarly, in art critic Mark Hudson’s review for *The Daily Telegraph*, the dancers are described as ‘bringing new life to the hackneyed notion of “living sculpture” as they interweave echoes of classical dance, classical sculpture and 21st century high camp’ (Hudson 2016: unpaginated).

voguing⁶⁵ and Kabuki.⁶⁶ Along with the more pedestrian movements of walking, there is a deliberate collision of form and style. The dancers' costumes add to this deliberate temporal mismatch: they are dressed in classical ballet leggings, red jumpers and huge oversized pearls, reminiscent of 1980s fashion. There are further layered references in how the dancers walk the lines of geometric patterning overlaid on the Duveen's marble floor, which recall both baroque garden design and early video performances from the late 1960s onwards by American conceptual artist Bruce Nauman (b. 1941).⁶⁷ Furthermore, the central section of the Duveen allows the dancers opportunities to perform solos, accompanied by a recorded piece of fifteenth century Spanish court music, which is the only audio element to the work, and adds the Renaissance to the historical mix.

There are therefore several temporal layers to the work – neo-classical, baroque, Renaissance, late twentieth century and, of course, the present day of the twenty-first century performance. It is dance in the museum as a slice of archaeology, a deliberately playful layering of temporalities. As one art critic observed, the work 'concertinas time, in just the way that the gallery does' (Searle 2016: unpaginated).

This metaphor of the concertina-like action of how both the art museum and the dance

⁶⁵ Voguing, or vogue, is a highly stylized modern house dance that originated among the predominantly black gay community of the Harlem dance halls in the 1960s and 70s. As it developed into the late 1980s, the style was notably culturally appropriated in pop musician Madonna's song and music video *Vogue* (1990) – although, as Madonna is an advocate for gay rights, it was a well-regarded appropriation – and it is showcased in the 1990 documentary *Paris is Burning*. It is characterized by angular, rigid arm, leg and body movements.

⁶⁶ Kabuki, meaning 'singing and dancing', is a traditional Japanese theatre form, which began during the Edo period (1603-1868) and is characterized by very stylized acting and by the elaborate make-up worn by its performers. In 2005 it was designated by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

⁶⁷ In particular, some elements of the Bronstein performance work appear to be based on American artist Bruce Nauman's 1967 video work *Walking In An Exaggerated Manner Around the Perimeter of a Square* where, with a pronounced swinging of the hips, Nauman walks forwards and backwards around a square of white masking tape affixed to the studio floor. Describing the floor markings in Bronstein's work, curator Linsey Young alludes to how the work 'directly talks to works by Bruce Nauman and choreography by Rosemary Butcher, people interested in pedestrian movement' (Young cited in Mairs 2016: unpaginated).

performance it houses frames time is a useful one. Past and present layer neatly one on top of the other, constantly unfolding and refolding. The audience's own moving through the space accompanying the work as it temporally unfolds and refolds adds to the sense of the visitor feeling not only a witness to the performance, but embroiled and involved in it, yet somehow as art critic Adrian Searle (2016) also notes, 'out of time' and temporally disoriented. *Historical Dances in an Antique Setting* explores how falsified history is and how it is constantly re-made in the present. The knock-on effect for dance in the museum is how cultural heritage can be continually misrepresented. Whereas Bronstein is ostensibly playful in his approach to this, my own project hopes to exploit a perhaps more ostensibly political approach in its questioning of whether dance in the archaeological museum can provide another representation for female cultural history, where it has previously been misrepresented or misappropriated.⁶⁸ The notion of the falsity of history, of the potential 'artificiality' of history, is appealing to any project that uses the 'artifice' of dance (or performance or theatre) to experiment with temporality in any space that aims to define a view of history. The deliberate falsity of the space and the playful artificiality of the movement are both exploited by Bronstein to demonstrate how what we believe to be accurate representation is actually skilful trickery and performance. It is significant to note that the Duveen galleries themselves, despite their neo-classical proportions, are themselves only a copy of a copy, having been built in 1937. Likewise, I think again of the artifice of my own performing in the Ashmolean's cast gallery in 2015, replicating or re-imagining the ancient Roman dance form not among a gallery of original Roman sculptures but among a gallery of plaster copies.

⁶⁸ I am not saying here that Bronstein's work is apolitical: he clearly understands architecture's power relations and indeed the power relations inherent in the architecture of the art museum, but he keeps the tone light and playful.

Fig. 3: Rosalie Wahlfrid in Pablo Bronstein's *Historical Dances in an Antique Setting*, Tate Britain, 2016. Photograph: Brotherton / Lock.

Public Collection

What it means to copy a historical original and what happens in the action of copying – or re-enacting - is something that is also explored in the second of my chosen case studies, *Public Collection* by Romanian artists Alexandra Pirici and Manuel Pelmus, of which a version was presented at another of the UK's Tate institutions, Tate Modern, at the same time as Bronstein's work was being presented across the river at Tate Britain. *Public Collection* explores ideas of temporality and collection, and of how art-works co-exist in space and time with other works. Moreover, it questions the idea of how choreographic movement might provide a useful challenge to a permanent art museum collection. The work is a live exploration of artworks that aims to interrogate the art museum as a permanent collection. Initiated following the 'immaterial retrospective' which Pirici and Pelmus presented at the Venice Biennial in 2013, the *Public Collection* project presents an exploration of artworks both historical and recent, reactivating them via the body during what the artists term a 'continuous action' (somewhat significantly, the artists do not refer to their work as a performance) which is carried out by a group of five performers.⁶⁹ Like Bronstein's *Historical Dances*, Pirici and Pelmus' *Public Collection* approaches art history from the perspective of challenging the museum as an institution that archives, historicizes and effectively chooses which views of history, of art, of form and of style should predominate. One major difference with Bronstein's work at Tate Britain is that in Pirici and Pelmus' project, the political element is more apparent, or perhaps at least more of an explicit driving force behind it. The fact that the artists do not call what they are doing a performance but an ongoing action, signposting

⁶⁹ In addition to Tate Modern, the work was previously presented at the Van Abbe museum in Eindhoven (Netherlands) as *Public Collection of Modern Art* in 2014.

towards performance art or to a non-traditional dance form, suggests an overtly political aspect to the work. Although the work is playful, they appear less interested than Bronstein in the artifice and theatricality of performance to accomplish a political end but rather use physical, bodily enactment as a strategy to attempt to (re)-claim history.

At Tate Modern, *Public Collection* was enacted by a group of five performers who used their bodies to transform artworks originally made in other media. These included works from the Tate collection, such as Mark Rothko's *Seagram murals* (1958-9), Carl Andre's *Equivalent VIII* (1966) and Tania Bruguera's *Tatlin's Whisper #5* (2008), which was itself a performance, alongside works from other public collections. Tate's website described the work as 'though [...] playful [...], critically propos[ing] an alternative system of value in which the live act prompts us to consider how we might embody a shared heritage' (Tate, 2016b). Whereas Bronstein's *Historical Dances* aims to show how cultural heritage might be misrepresented, Pirici and Pelmus seek to ask how heritage might be shared through the body. It sees the museum as a relatively recent construct (which it is, of course) and, while it understands that the moment in the eighteenth century when collections became public and theoretically accessible to all was an important moment for society, it poses the possibility of a new 'immaterial collection'. If, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the museum was a place where material objects were collected and placed into public circulation, and as such was representative of the industrial, productive society which first built such institutions (cf. von Hantelmann, 2014), then might the twenty-first century museum collection be an 'immaterial' one, containing 'objects' that only exist when they materialize in bodily actions?

As Pirici (Casino Luxembourg 2016: unpaginated) herself notes, the term ‘immaterial’ is quite a controversial one. It points to the ephemerality of the moving body in time and space, yet as Cramer (2014b) has pointed out, the moving body in the museum can also be considered material, in its very live-ness and fleshiness. In *Public Collection*, the artworks are rematerialized with bodies; the human body and live presence becomes material. Ironically, despite the title of the work, I find the materiality of *Public Collection* more significant than its immateriality. If one considers the human body as material, interesting questions can be raised about how the body might produce an ambiguous relationship between subject and object in the museum, or how it might function somewhere between subject and object. Furthermore, the primacy of the body in the work, in re-enacting both well-known and lesser-known visual art-works through the body, lends that body a revitalized sense of empowerment. As Pelmus notes:

The fact that we use a few bodies to transform the works of the biggest museums in the world does give a feeling of empowerment [...] in the sense that you are reclaiming history. You bring everything in the present but the relationship with history gets tensed. It is an aesthetic gesture, but it is also a very political one. (Casino Luxembourg, 2016: unpaginated)

However, it is perhaps worth questioning here exactly who is feeling empowered: is it the choreographers, Pelmus and Pirici, or the performers themselves (who are often unnamed)? Is it then the body of the performer or the creative artist (choreographer) ‘using’ the bodies who is empowered through this kind of work? In my practice, I am both choreographer and performer, so the empowerment is indeed mine; but the question of the body’s empowerment to ‘reclaim history’ is a thorny one when we consider a project such as Pelmus and Pirici’s where a work of art in a museum is laboured on by several performing bodies and yet is attributed to a single artist. Is the labouring body here then still as nameless, powerless and disempowered as ever?

Whilst there is this idea of what Pirici and Pelmus term a ‘quotation’ of the visual artwork in its bodily re-enactment, and there is an accepted and acceptable practice of appropriation inherent in the work itself, the way in which *Public Collection* functions is that the performers always publicly announce the artwork that is about to be re-enacted. With this public statement, it is always very clear what the reference is. In such a way, *Public Collection* does not deny the historical reference but clarifies and announces it for the general public. Yet, through the action of re-enactment, the work questions how art history is represented and tries, like Bronstein’s *Historical Dances*, to re-propose history, to shift it, to reconfigure it. In the very action of the moving body, *Public Collection* aims to create some movement inside history, and to reclaim history, which of course has a very political dimension. Moreover,

The objective is to propose a new possibility of displaying collections, of remembering art-works, and even of producing new art-works using the old ones as references or as starting-points. (ibid)

The collection is thus shifting, and different or even new works can enter the collection next to the canonical history of art. Again, the received canon can be challenged; and that which is defined as cultural heritage, itself often deeply political and contested, is brought into question. The play on words in the work’s title *Public Collection* seems to be asking to what extent cultural heritage is publicly shared, and to what extent it remains an elitist construct, where a vision of history is determined by the dominant, privileged few. This latter point is something that my own practice in the archaeological museum aims to challenge.

Pirici (ibid) argues that *Public Collection* in fact renders the concept of art history more accessible to the museum or gallery visitor. For whereas, traditionally,

museums imply principles of separation, and of the objective experiencing of an art object taken out of context and distanced from the viewer/visitor beneath glass, the fact that the art object is now re-collected in a live human presence, and the museum visitor is faced with a live body instead of an 'object', makes it difficult for that dis-identification to occur, and thereby offers a potentially different affective experience. By working with a live presence in the museum space, very different displays and encounters can be produced between the audience and the objects – and subjects - that they can encounter and empathise with. The work's time and temporality can also be associated with these newly emerging relationships between audience and object / subject. Pirici and Pelmus try to avoid describing the work as a performance, which would imply a finite duration, and prefer the term 'ongoing action' as this, in addition to the political aspect I have alluded to above, also implies a certain duration and distribution in time, better suited to the idea that the work unfolds in time (similar to Searle's concertina metaphor for Bronstein's work). Even if the material is somehow fixed, there is a different experience of it being available to the visitor every day that it is in action. This in turn calls to the wider idea of how bodily art-works continuously evolve, shift and change through time and through history.

Dancing Museums

These preoccupations with cultural heritage and with how choreographic practice might reclaim history seem far removed in the final case study, the European research project, *Dancing Museums*. At the heart of the project here, continuing in a slightly similar vein to Pirici and Pelmus' *Public Collection* but without an ostensibly political aspect, are questions of how to render collections more public and more accessible through the use of choreography and the (dancing) body. As such, this case

study is a little different from the first two. *Dancing Museums* was a research project that brought together five European dance organisations and eight internationally renowned museums (including France's Louvre and the UK's National Gallery), and it primarily aimed to explore new ways of interacting with audiences. The project, which began in June 2015 and ran until March 2017, was composed principally of week-long residencies in each of the institutions involved, and the research and development undertaken by choreographers, dance organisations and art education specialists aimed to 'define and implement new methods to engage audiences and enhance the journeys which people make when walking through the rooms of historical artefacts and art spaces' (Dancing Museums 2015: unpaginated). As such, audience engagement is at the very core of the *Dancing Museums* project, with its key aim to highlight the role that live dance performance can play in enhancing public understanding and engagement in art. The potential 'danger' of this is that, unlike Bronstein's work but I would argue as Pirici and Pelmus' *Public Collection* might be at risk of doing too, choreography is only present in the museum in order to be of service to the visual art. What this might then say about the status of dance in the museum is important for my wider study. It is helpful to remember though that, unlike the other two case studies examined here, the *Dancing Museums* project describes itself as a research, rather than a performance, project. Furthermore, here I will be focussing on the *Dancing Museums* residency at the National Gallery, London (7th-13th November 2016), the project's only UK residency, in association with UK partner dance organisation, Siobhan Davies Dance, rather than the wider two-year project. Therefore, as far as this final case study is concerned, currently I only provide a fairly narrow window onto how the project negotiated this contradiction of allowing dance its own status in the art historical museum where, according to the project's

stated aims, it was ostensibly there to promote audience engagement with the visual art.

Upon visiting rooms 31-34 of the National Gallery on a rainy Saturday in November 2016, the culminating weekend of the weeklong residency, I was greeted by five dance artists at work among the streams of tourists milling around the museum. The ‘event,’ visibly not a performance but a public sharing of the week’s research still in progress, was discreetly advertised with signs outlining the title and basic premise of the research project. The sharing was one of the week’s several public events (which had also included gallery talks on the relationship between dance and painting, and on how we might preserve art-works, which itself included a short solo performance by one of the project’s five dance artists⁷⁰). In the centre of the larger room 32, the project’s UK dance artist and choreographer, Lucy Suggate, dressed in a vibrant blue jump-suit, which matched the royal blues of the Renaissance virgins in paintings hung on the walls surrounding her, ‘performed’ her solo practice while a visual artist sketched her movements, and gallery staff handed out paper and chalks asked observing visitors if they too wanted to draw (perhaps in an attempt to frame the work not as a performance but as an on-going research activity).⁷¹ The solo, characterised by fluid, falling movements and moments of silence and stillness, immediately gave a sense of the double at work in the ‘dancing museum’: the live body moving and the static body fixed in pigment. In sustained moments of pause, Suggate’s live body suddenly seemed ‘fixed’ in time mirroring the Virgin in the

⁷⁰ This was the solo by Connor Schumacher, a Rotterdam-based dancer and choreographer, which he had created for the 2016 Louvre residency but which he transferred to the National Gallery space. I discuss this solo exploring ruins, remnants, and the body as a declining materiality, further below (pp. 101-2).

⁷¹ However, most visitors seemed content to film on their smartphones rather than engage with the work by drawing.

painting in front of her gaze. However, her stillness and her gaze seems to serve to focus the visitor's gaze on the art-work hung above her; and it might be argued that the live body was in fact eclipsed by the art object, and dance eclipsed by the visual art-work. During an interview that took place two weeks after the residency, Suggate told me that while it might have seemed during this moment as though the dance was at the service of the art, what she was in fact interested in highlighting were the inter-relationships involved in looking and in viewing; in that multi-layering of the relationships between museum visitor looking at dancer, artist sketching looking at dancer, dancer looking at the painting, and museum visitor looking at the painting.⁷² The solo practice aimed to 'build a space' (Suggate, 2016) for these relationships of looking to emerge in a movement practice that itself 'has no time-frame, folding and unfolding in the infinite space that is being built' (ibid). As such, the solo aimed to interrupt the sedentary time of the historical art museum, and to exist out of time.

Other tasks presented also seemed to be designed primarily for the purpose of encouraging the visitor to look at the artwork differently. In the smaller, darker and more intimate space of the National Gallery's room 31, dance artists Tatiana Julien (France) and Fabio Novembrini (Italy) guided visitors in silent relaxation exercises, asking them to close their eyes and rest, observing the sounds of the 'landscape' around them, before leading them through something akin to a contact improvisation exercise at the end of which they would position the visitor before a certain painting, ask them to open their eyes, and reflect upon how whether this different type of

⁷² This was also a key concern for the National Gallery's Head of Education, Gill Hart, one of the principal figures of the UK residency on the museum side. In an interview with me a fortnight after the residency (on 1st December 2016), Hart vehemently stressed how she would never wish for dance to be at the service of the visual art, but rather to 'co-exist' (Hart, 2016) as equal art forms. She also emphasized the fact that this was not a curatorial project, but one about audience engagement; for Hart, this was not about art history, but about how audiences might engage with a collection.

kinaesthetic engagement had made them view the work differently. Participants professed to feelings of solitude in the busy space, feeling as though they were alone in the room with the paintings, even though the small room was fairly crowded. Here, perhaps more than in Suggate's solo, the 'choreographic movement' seemed at service of the visual art, and while it might have been an interesting experiment for the participant, I could not help but wonder what it meant for the wider audience witnessing the task. For even if the work was not intended to be performative, it was still on display and, as such, functioned as any other performance would. A final example was Austria-based dance artist, Dante Murillo, asking visitors to physically push him through the gallery space. By engaging them in what began an intimate contact duet of pushing and looking, he manipulated the visitor towards a certain painting and in the very physical act of their pushing against his resistance he asked them to look at the painting. Once more the choreographic action was employed to support the visitor in looking at the visual art. As such, most of these tasks, even if it was not their original intention, seemed to reduce dance to a lower status than visual art in the museum's hierarchy.



Fig. 4: Lucy Suggate's solo at the National Gallery (UK) as part of *Dancing Museums*, November 2016. Photograph: author's own.

My initial observations as a museum visitor witnessing the research work in progress were corroborated and challenged by later discussions and interviews with several members of the UK *Dancing Museums* team including Programme Director for Siobhan Davies Dance, Lauren Wright, herself a curator and responsible for the overall direction of the UK's dance side of *Dancing Museums*; Gill Hart, Head of Education at the National Gallery; and Lucy Suggate, the project's UK dance artist. Wright explained that the aim of the London residency had been to move away from the more performance-based aspects of previous residencies and to re-align the project in its original spirit of researching audience interaction with visual art through developing embodied ways of looking. In Suggate's own words, the project attempts to 'place dance within the museum context in the hope of expanding visitor engagement' (Suggate, 2016).⁷³ Wright too was very clear that audience engagement lay at the heart of the Dancing Museums project and that most of the experiments undertaken during the National Gallery residency were designed to focus on immediate encounters with the visual artworks rather than an understanding or interest in art history. As Wright told me,

This residency what we've really been doing is asking [the artists] to think about the audience, and so everything that they do really has been motivated by that thinking and by thinking about what does how I am in this space do when other people perceive the paintings, or see themselves in this space or see the space in general, to think about what is possible here. It's been much more open ended this time, so the expectation is not that they produce a performance, it's that they are at work in the space doing the kind of experiments and research that they've been doing throughout the week with a little bit more attention to the fact that there are many more people around that they are observers to that process. (Wright, 2016)

As such, the residency worked within a context of active research into audience engagement rather than examining the curatorial place of dance in the museum

⁷³ Here dance is seen to be providing something for the museum, rather than 'co-existing' as hoped for by others involved in the project cf. p. 97, fn. 72 above.

through a series of performances. Wright explained that the emphasis on promoting ‘engaged’ ways of viewing at the National Gallery meant that the week’s work differed from previous residencies where the performance work created had a different sort of content. For example, as Wright vividly describes, the processes at work in the National Gallery residency aimed to create an experience for a visitor:

There’s a piece – well, a situation – where Dante [one of the dancers] asks the visitor to push him through the space and it’s really interesting because I’ve done it with him a few times, and you start off quite gently, and he pushes quite hard back, so it becomes quite quickly quite an energetic experience and very intimate, you’re kind of rolling around in the space, I mean not actually, but you’re in physical contact in the space, and you immediately lose awareness of everything else around you, until very skilfully he brings you back to the paintings in the pushing. And then you’re pushing and looking and talking at the same time. He starts with “How are you? What’s your name? Where are you from?” and then he starts to say, “What do see in the painting?” [...] there’s a Medusa painting in Room 32 and often he’ll try and move a person into that painting and look at it in this excited state and it’s like the whole thing comes to life, it’s really quite extraordinary...It’s more about that thing, the paintings being so enlivened as a result of your physical exertion. (Wright, 2016)

In addition, Suggate (2016) used almost curatorial language to describe the research process in the National Gallery, evoking how the research aimed to ‘take care’ of the body of the visitor, to ‘support it’ in new ways of looking, to ‘guide’ it, to ‘re-frame’ it. Suggate’s thinking prompts me to ask whether the choreographer in the art museum might in fact become another curator, re-framing the collection by both using the moving body of the dancer and of the visitor.

In opposition to this introduction into the museum of what we might term more experimental ‘choreographic situations,’ I would like to cite an example of work from a previous *Dancing Museums* residency, a solo originally created by dance artist Connor Schumacher for the Louvre’s Mesopotamia galleries. In London, it was presented in the context of a talk on ‘Conservation and Dance’ that took place in the

National Gallery during the UK residency week. Although the Louvre is perhaps more of a ‘historical’ object-based museum than the other art institutions involved in the project, rather unhelpfully, the *Dancing Museums* project generally tends to blur any distinction between the museum and the gallery in the work. However, I would argue that the stakes are very different. In our discussions, Wright pointed out how there is something meaningful for the artist in the very fact that these objects or paintings are historical works within a collection, and Schumacher’s solo for the Louvre addresses these ideas. His is a solo about conservation and the human body; a mysterious *Pierrot Lunaire* figure in white face-paint enters the dark, underground galleries and to a soundtrack of his own writing on disintegrating, crumbling bodies (with the repeated phrase ‘there are gaps in the history of these objects’) makes gestures that evoke crumbling and fading away. As such, the body is presented to the audience as a declining materiality, as fragile as the ancient objects encased in glass around him. As such, the live yet disintegrating body becomes part of the historical collection, reminding us that as time passes, so too does the body. When presented in the much loftier, brighter spaces of the National Gallery, even though it immediately followed a discussion about art conservation and preservation, Schumacher’s solo felt somewhat out of place. Although it touched on essential questions of temporality, re-contextualising it in the National Gallery space, although an art historical space, felt rather at odds with the rest of the week’s practice. However, there is something about Schumacher’s vision of gesture being an imperfect holder of history which not only speaks to my own practice, but also prompts me to connect the work undertaken in the *Dancing Museums* project to Siobhan Davies Dance’s 2017 work, *material / rearranged / to be*. This work, whilst it came about separately from the organisation’s involvement in the *Dancing Museums* project, undeniably has a lot of connections

with it. The piece, which is built on the idea of gesture being the holder of history through art works and which uses images from Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*, toured gallery spaces in the UK in 2017 (the Barbican, London, UK; the Whitworth Gallery, Manchester, UK and the Blue Coat, Liverpool, UK) and it is interesting to view the work in the light of the organisation's involvement in the *Dancing Museums* project. However, it is important to note that *material / rearranged / to be* is presented in contemporary gallery spaces – not historical art situations – and, as such, continues to function as an artwork *per se*.

A significant point raised by Wright might account for why dance finds itself at the service of visual art. A current trend in dance in the museum shows dance often entering the museum under the auspices of outreach and education work: this is the case in *Dancing Museums*, where the main aspect of the work is audience engagement. Yet, when dance itself becomes an art object, it tends to find itself within a contemporary gallery setting and it appears to be more difficult for it to enter an art historical setting as an art historical object, unless as in the case of the Tate and Catherine Wood, there is a dedicated Curator of Performance (which may go part-way to explaining the success of Bronstein's historical undertaking in *Historical Dances in an Antique Setting*, given its Tate context). Using the *Dancing Museums* project as a reference, I am somewhat troubled by the lack of curatorial input when dance enters the art history museum; it is as though dance can enter the collection as long as it services the visual art work, but if dance wishes to be there on its own terms, it seems fairly difficult to convince those curators, 'the guardians of space and time' (Wright 2016) to let it in. This may be partly because these deeply professionalised, historical institutions function hierarchically and so changing practices is likely very difficult,

but there is certainly room and reason to investigate this further. It certainly begs the question of why might dance be so troubling for the art historical museum.

In conclusion, these three case studies – all in the UK, all in 2016 – seem to operate at various positions on a sliding spectrum of how choreographic work might exist as an independent art-object in the art museum. At one end, Bronstein’s work at Tate Britain cleverly challenges received notions of history by its witty juxtaposition of temporalities and asks how the dancing body might be employed to reimagine our cultural heritage. Here the choreography is an intrinsic part of the artwork within an art historical context; dance is in the historical art museum on its own terms and appears to be least at the service of the visual artworks surrounding it. At the other end of the spectrum, the *Dancing Museums* National Gallery residency, is where, I would argue, the focus on audience engagement necessarily means that dance is very much rendered at the service of the visual art works, even if that might not be the intention.⁷⁴ In the middle sits Pirici and Pelmus’ *Public Collection* which, while its emphasis on the materiality of the body (despite the misleading description of it as ‘immaterial collection’) is useful in terms of its politicising dimension, the fact that it is composed of re-enacting visual artworks with the body again means it potentially runs the risk of rendering dance at the service of visual art history. In terms of my own practice, it is worth noting that all three case studies investigate dance in art historical museums and not in object-based historical museums. However, the analysis of these three cases is useful to my own research project because, even if the context is different, the underlying questions of materiality, temporality and reclaiming history, are similar. How such questions might be addressed through a

⁷⁴ This is a point corroborated by Wookey (2016) in a blog post about the *Dancing Museums* project at the National Gallery.

dance practice in the archaeological museum is something that currently appears under-explored, and I hope that through its dance practice in the archaeological museum, this thesis will respond to that gap.

As a conclusion to this chapter, I would like to leave the last word with two of the artists explored here. Both comments come from ‘The Place of Performance in the Museum’ seminar that took place at Tate Modern in June 2016. Firstly, Manuel Delius’ summary of dance in the museum offers an evocation of the interplay of different temporalities and modalities, that which historically and politically promises permanence, and that which is historically associated with being temporary or ephemeral. Delius goes on to state that there is ‘an interesting alliance and tension in this kind of mix of temporalities and modalities that could be productive’ (Tate, 2016c). In the same discussion, Pablo Bronstein suggests that there:

is something intrinsically dead about museums, and that’s what interesting about them. When we are seduced by the strangeness of the past, of a weird relic, it’s precisely that: it speaks of another age, reminds us of another time. (ibid)

I would like to suggest that my project for the live dancing body to enter the ‘dead’ space of the archaeological museum might continue in the spirit of these comments. Then, once she enters the historical museum, might it be possible for the dancer – or indeed the dance – to exploit the productive tension between shifting temporalities and thereby become another guardian of space and time? It is to this question that the following chapter turns.

5. Re-collection in the Museum: Remembering, Dismembering and ‘Performance as Archive’

Introduction

The dancer's body carries the memory of all the lives it has described. It gives itself away in the moment of performance, so that as soon as each image is created, it is shed and exists only in memory. So is art the memory of movement and of being moved? I'm interested in the moment at which movement becomes memory. (Khan 2015: unpaginated)

I imagine the work of the choreographic as [...] a dialogic opening in which artwork is not only looked at but looks back. (Joy 2014:1)

The previous chapters have discussed the world of the museum, arguing that it is characterised by notions of the fragmentary, of traces and remains, so it seems fitting to open this chapter with these two fragments of text. Whereas choreographer Akram Khan's comment points to the moving body as archive and the moment at which performance becomes memory, disappearing and yet remaining, echoing Schneider's concept of performance *becoming* remains, performance artist and scholar Jenn Joy's 'looking back' has two-fold interpretations: the artwork is a two-faced Janus, not only 'looking back' in a temporal sense but also returning the onlooker's gaze i.e. 'looking on, looking forwards.' In my own practice-as-research, I am interested in where choreographic performance in the museum both looks forward and looks back, offering fluid, porous temporalities as a performing archive past, a performing present and an archive in the process of becoming. The practice then asks: how are these shifting temporalities related to the ideas of both the body and the museum as spaces of memory and of remembering, and to the relationship between collection and re-collection?

Related to explorations of the ‘material turn’ in museum studies and of the museum as a potential site of embodied encounters (Dudley, 2010; Rees-Leahy, 2012) as outlined in chapter two, is a significant body of research investigating the history museum as a space of memory. As museum studies scholar Gaynor Kavanagh points out in *Dream Spaces: Memory and the Museum* (2000), the movement from object-centred history museum practice to one working more flexibly with meanings and memories is increasingly entering museum thinking as expressed not just in curatorial practice, but also in the name and central strategy of the museum more generally. Kavanagh’s study is of interest to me as it is useful in situating my overarching concept of the body as the site of counter-memory, as alternative archive, within the wider context of the museum-memory nexus, particularly in terms of the history museum. As Kavanagh boldly asks, are historical museums ‘collections of objects or memories?’ (2000: 98) and if they are collections of memories, where does bodily memory fit into this process of re-collection? In this chapter, as I examine the dancing body as a palimpsest of memory,⁷⁵ I will begin to outline and evaluate my own practice-as-research, specifically the very first performances of the solo fragment *Myrrha* (2015) in the context of cast gallery in the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford. This solo was then later developed to become one of the four fragments of the durational *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* performed in the same museum in 2018. While the solo is based on principles of the ancient Roman dance form, *tragoedia saltata*, within the context of the museum, the performance operates on a multiplicity of temporalities: the past historical ‘dead’ form, the present ‘living’ performance, and the archive of the dance still in the process of becoming.

⁷⁵ Again, this idea can be related to the idea of the dancer enacting a ‘palimpsest history’ when she performs a dance work (Salgado Llopis 2017: 63 following Dean *et al.* 2015: 5) cf. chapter two above, p. 44, fn. 34.



Fig. 5: *Myrrha* above galleries 32-33 of the Ashmolean Museum, 2018. Photograph: Brandon Kahn.

Along with Kavanagh's *Dream Spaces*, two other studies provide interesting departure points for my discussion in this chapter: the comprehensive collection *Museums and Memory* edited by Susan A. Crane (2000) and Silke Arnold-de Simine's *Mediating Memory in the Museum: trauma, empathy, nostalgia* (2013). Crane reminds us that the 'exposition' of the museal object, as Mieke Bal (1996: 3) suggests, puts on display and embodies

the discourse of memorial representation that both affirms and informs: informing the viewer of its significance, the object as display also affirms its significance. Being collected means being valued and remembered institutionally; being displayed means being incorporated into the extra-institutional memory of the museum visitors. "Recollection" is inspired by collections [...] (Crane 2000: 2)

The connection between object - collection and memory - recollection is a salient point. In the museum, an object (or a dancing body) is displayed in order to be remembered; it is collected in order to be recollected. Similarly, in her wide-ranging study exploring the paradigm shifts in exhibiting practices associated

with the transformation of history museums in the UK and in Europe into ‘spaces of memory’ over the past thirty years, Arnold de-Simine highlights the influence of memory discourses on international trends in museum cultures. She looks to the nature of the relationship between exhibited object and viewer within these memory discourses and in so doing raises a significant point for my study:

What is often missing in museums are truly social experiences [...] even though museums are collective and public forms of remembrance, they thrive on modes of relating to the past that are based on the spectacle which elicits an individuated response and negates the relational quality of the encounter.
(Arnold de-Simine, 2013: 203)

In response to Arnold de-Simine, what I am asking is whether the performing, dancing body as a site of counter-memory, as alternative archival ‘object’ within the museum, in fact provides the space for an encounter that is at once both individualised and collectively experienced. This may in turn be related to the very useful conception of the ‘exhibition ritual’ or ‘event-space’ currently espoused by the art historian Dorothea von Hantelmann.⁷⁶ Looking at time-based and predominantly ‘performed’ exhibitions, von Hantelmann argues that by turning time into the explicit structuring element, the exhibition *de facto* changes in time, and creates its own time into which visitor is drawn. This new modality then creates a new exhibition format, an individualised ‘event-space.’ These are spaces that on the one hand, in their temporal mode and as a dramaturgical composition, are close to a theatrical event, yet on the other, in their mode of addressing (the liberal framework of the opening hours, the freedom for viewers to go, stay, watch or leave at any moment, the fact that viewers are grouped not in a fixed collective but in random, temporary clusters) stay attuned to the liberal, individualised principle of the exhibition. It is an interesting lens

⁷⁶ cf. Dorothea von Hantelmann (2014)

through which to look at my own dancing practice in the history museum: to negate Arnold de-Simine's argument, the 'event-space' of a performance might then provide a truly social experience, a collective and ritual form of remembrance, with the moving body at the heart of the remembering. Ideas of the museum in relation to ritual are not new (Pomian, 1990; Duncan, 1991). While Duncan (1991) looks at the space of the art exhibition as a ritual space, Pomian (1990) provides a deep historical perspective on collecting practice as related to ritual practices. Of particular interest to me in my own exploration of *tragoedia saltata* is Pomian's further reflection on offerings, and the similarity between the Greek and Roman temples and our own museums, 'for it was in these temples that offerings were amassed and displayed [where] the object becomes *sacrum*' (Pomian 1994: 164). They functioned 'as intermediaries for this world and the next, the sacred and the secular, while at the same time constituting, at the very heart of the secular world, symbols of the distant, the hidden, the absent [...] go-betweens between those who gazed upon them and the invisible from whence they came' (ibid: 171). Alongside this idea of the museum as temple is a newer one, the idea of the body at the heart of this ritual of (re)collection and memorial. I will address this further in chapter eight, and it will, I hope, prove to be an area where my own study can make a valid contribution to current knowledge.



Fig. 6: *Myrrha*, part of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*, Ashmolean Museum, 2018. Photograph: Marchella Ward

***Myrrha*: a danced tragedy**

As briefly outlined in the *Introduction* (pp. 19-20), in 2013-4, I was a participating choreographer on the APGRD / University of Oxford TORCH research project ‘Ancient Dance in Modern Dancers’, led by Helen Slaney, Caroline Potter and Sophie Bocksberger, and which explored contemporary re-interpretations of the ancient Roman dance form *tragoedia saltata*. I am indebted to this project as a starting point to the practice-as-research that I have developed for this thesis. As it underpins the practice-as-research element of this thesis, before going any further, I will here introduce the ancient dance form.

The Latin name for the dance form *tragoedia saltata* (or, in its ancient Greek form, *orchēsis*) translates simply as ‘danced tragedy.’ The form is sometimes referred to as tragic pantomime, and it developed between the first and fifth centuries BCE.

Very simply, it was a form of narrative dance in which tragic scenarios drawn from classical mythology were performed by a solo masked dancer, who played each role in turn. Originating in Augustan Rome in the first century, it became hugely successful and spread rapidly throughout the empire, remaining a popular medium into Late Antiquity, with its skilled dancers often attaining celebrity status. As classical scholar Helen Slaney reminds us, referring to observations made by the ancient commentators Lucian, Libanius and Aristaenetus, ‘the dancer’s extraordinary polymorphism, [the] ability to embody a vast gallery of characters, emotions and nonhuman entities, was a skill that [for the ancients] verged on the magical (*thelxis*), something *thaumastos*, a wonder’ (Slaney 2017: 161).⁷⁷ In addition, we know that the dancer was accompanied by musicians, by a percussionist who kept the rhythm with a *scabellum* (a foot-clapper) and perhaps by a solo cantor or full chorus who sang an accompanying libretto. Although no libretti (*fabulae salticae*) are extant, it has been conjectured that Roman author Ovid’s (43BCE - 17CE) *Metamorphoses* may have been written with pantomime in mind, especially given the epic poem’s emphasis on polymorphism (cf. Lada Richards, 2013). Importantly, Ovid’s text has become a key source for my own choreographic practice-as-research.⁷⁸

As Slaney (2017) rightly comments, our contemporary knowledge of ancient pantomime’s choreographic content comes almost entirely from textual sources,

⁷⁷ Slaney is referring here to Lucian *The Dance* 85 on *thelxis*; on amazement, Libanius *Orations* 64.104 (θαυμασιωτέρας καμπάς) and Aristaenetus *Epistles* 1.26 (τίς οὐ τεθαύμακεν ὄρχουμένην).

⁷⁸ Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* dates to 8CE, so is contemporaneous with the development of pantomime. Of particular import to my own project is Lada-Richards’ (2016) argument on the relationship of pantomime and arborization narratives in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (including the story of Myrrha). She argues that Ovid’s tales of tree-metamorphosis may well have been informed, even if subliminally, by his active recollection of or subconscious familiarity with real-life, danced choreographies for pantomimic transformations into trees.

although these are occasionally supplemented by iconographic analogues from the visual arts (see Lada-Richards, 2004). The most prominent of the textual sources is the dialogue by second-century satirist Lucian entitled *The Dance* (*peri Orchēseōs*), and although this text – and others – are richly detailed, the impressions of pantomime that we receive from the ancient sources are ‘necessarily disjointed, fragmentary and displaced, requiring reassembly for coherent patterns to emerge’ (Slaney 2017: 162). Although over the past decade there have been a number of rigorous studies on Graeco-Roman pantomime by classical scholars,⁷⁹ Slaney points out that:

there remains a gap at the centre of our discursive scrutiny: the dancer’s absent body. This absence acquires particular prominence when our subject is an archaeology of the senses. Evidently, the experiential gap can be neither ignored nor overcome. We cannot perceive the ancient dancer’s own sensory world nor occupy his body, since our senses are differently attuned by cultural conditioning. (Slaney 2017: 162)

While recognizing Roman theatre as spectacle, as the ‘imperium of the gaze’ (ibid: 159), Slaney is at pains to point out that an important epistemological and linguistic shift in the critical discourse on pantomime would be the practice of a multi-sensory and kinaesthetic mode of historical enquiry. She suggests that we ought to move away from the visual paradigm of ‘regarding’ ancient theatre from a performer’s point of view to relating to it through a corporeal experience (cf. Foster, 2008). In other words, we ought to respond to the past as a practitioner rather than as a reader or a spectator. If Slaney following Foster is correct, it thus follows that in an exploration of an ancient dance form, choreographic practice becomes vital to the process of historical enquiry. Slaney thereby proposes that alongside the translation of ancient dance into critical language, we might also practise translating it into movement. This was

⁷⁹ Notably Garelli’s comprehensive historical account of the art-form (2007), Webb’s (2008a) discussion of pantomime as a site of transgression for everyday customs of movement and her study (Webb, 2008b) of the form from the performer’s perspective, Hall and Wyles’ edited collection (2008) addressing diverse aspects of the form’s praxis and social significance, and Macintosh’s (2010) study of pantomime’s reception from baroque ballet to Isadora Duncan.

exactly what I attempted alongside Slaney and her team as an invited choreographer on the TORCH ‘Ancient Dance in Modern Dancers’ project. The discoveries made in these early investigations formed initial starting-points for the practice-as-research outlined by this thesis. The development of the practice then led in turn to the making of the durational performance *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* for the Ashmolean.

Initially, for the TORCH project, in a workshop environment, the aim was to examine how dancers could approach and reconfigure the ancient form upon being given various stimuli texts by ancient Roman authors, such as Lucian’s aforementioned *The Dance* (from which we could glean that it was a solo, narrative, masked dance-theatre form, and from which even an albeit limited glossary of dance vocabulary could be compiled [see Appendix 1]), and a short extract from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* which provided the narrative. ‘New’ work was then created from those stimuli. During the initial workshop, the emphasis was very much on a kinaesthetic engagement with ancient material. The purpose was not reconstruction, as that would be an impossible endeavour, but a ‘re-imagining’ of the ancient form.⁸⁰ In this initial workshop setting, as dancer-choreographer, I was essentially an ethnographic subject; the project wished to investigate how contemporary dancers responded to the ancient material before them, and how they went about ‘reimagining’ the ancient form. I quickly became more interested in what the practice itself was doing and so began the journey from ‘researched’ subject to researcher.

⁸⁰ See pp. 118-124 below for a fuller discussion on the varieties of reconstruction and the impossibilities of ‘reconstructing’ an ancient dance form.

Following the discoveries of the initial TORCH workshop with Slaney and her team, I began to develop my own choreographic practice ‘reimagining’ this ancient form. I was interested in ‘tracing the experience of performing epic as a filter for past texts and past forms’, of being a moving body which is quite literally a living archive for an ancient, ‘dead’ choreographic form, ‘along with the performer’s inherent understanding of performance as both the art of the embodied and present moment’ (Crawley 2018b: 165). A very clear research question began to form: is it possible to simultaneously filter the past, embody the present and create ‘new’ work? How might choreography, like archaeology, allow us to excavate the body and the past? How might the fragments discovered be re-assembled? And if we were then to place this work in the archaeological museum, what might it do for both the museum and for dance? How might the dance (and the dancer) operate in a slippage of temporalities and exploit the lacunae, the gaps between, to present those previously unrealized histories, particularly those female stories and bodies which have been covered by history’s deliberate dust?

Myrrha is a short solo piece based on an episode in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 10.298-502 which was first performed in the context of the cast gallery of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford in 2015, and then in 2018 as one of the fragments of *Likely Terpsichore*?⁸¹ *Myrrha*, a harrowing tale of father-daughter incest, teenage pregnancy, and giving birth is, essentially, the narrative of what it means to become a mother and then have to give up a child. The solo follows Ovid’s plot, but disrupts its chronology; shuttling between past and present, the audience sees *Myrrha* as a frightened, ashamed teenage mother-to-be, witnessing her journey from the young

⁸¹ At this point, I invite the reader to view the accompanying video of the 2018 version of *Myrrha* (see video - 11:35-25:29).

woman enchanted by her own brand-new seductiveness to the outcast about to give birth to her father's child all alone in the desert. In despair because death seems too easy and yet to going on living is impossible, Myrrha begs the gods to deny her both life and death by changing her into some other form (cf. Ovid, *Met.* 10.487

'mutataeque mihi vitamque necemque negate' ['deny me life and death by changing me into some other form', my translation]). Her plea is granted and she is transformed into a myrrh tree. As tree-woman, she labours and gives birth to a son, Adonis, whom she then has to give up.



Fig. 7: *Myrrha*, part of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*, Ashmolean Museum, 2018.
Photograph: Brandon Kahn

Myrrha is a solo performance and I perform it masked. Whilst an ancient epic text (Ovid's *Metamorphoses*) is a springboard for the work, I focus on one episode. Although there are several characters involved, I 'zoom in' on Myrrha herself and play everything from her perspective. This is a conscious choice because I want to restore a live body to the young woman whose story has been appropriated by others,

Ovid included. While this solo is based on principles of the ancient Roman dance form, *tragoedia saltata* (that it is a solo, masked and narrative dance form) it is very much ‘contemporary’ dance, performed in the present moment by a body trained in Western contemporary performance techniques (specifically, Graham technique and Marceau mime technique). As such, certain choreographic choices originate from my body’s own training in these techniques – such as the clear use of contraction and release in Myrrha’s labouring, for example (see video from 21:38 onwards). Within its museum context, the performance is clearly operating on a multiplicity of temporalities: the ancient historical ‘dead’ form, the present ‘living’ performance, and the archive still in the process of becoming. As such, I would argue that the moment of performance in the museum may be posited, to borrow a phrase from poet Patrick McGuinness, as a kind of ‘déjà vu [...] two tenses grappling with one instant, one perception / forgotten as it happens, recalled before it has begun,’ (McGuinness 2015: 176). In the museum, the dance is a trick of memory, of re-collection.

The concept of the moving, dancing body as counter-memory is integral to my practice-as-research in *Myrrha*. Here I am once again indebted to Joseph Roach (1996), Rebecca Schneider (2001; 2011) and Diana Taylor (2003) and their explorations of the importance of the body within investigations of theatre history and performance theory. As I outlined in chapter two, it is Rebecca Schneider’s 2011 commentary on Taylor, which for me is most telling, where she points out how Taylor looks to ‘situate the repertoire as another kind of archive rather than emphasizing the archive as another kind of performance’ (Schneider 2011: 108). It is this latter argument that provides a discursive framework for my own practice-as research: an understanding of archive as living performance and performance as living archive. I

am interested in how choreographic performance in the museum offers fluid, porous temporalities, as performing archive past, performing archive present and an archive still, and always, in the process of becoming – and so I argue for a methodology of performance *as* archive.

Performance as Archive: Towards a ‘New’ Methodology in the Dancing Museum?

The basis for this methodology builds on an invaluable practice-as-research case study by performance scholars Gilli Bush-Bailey and Jacky Bratton (see Kershaw and Nicholson 2011: 98-108). Their study investigates the performing of Jane Scott’s romantic early nineteenth century melodrama as a viable, alternative historical archive for this theatrical form and as a counter-archive to the extant theatrical text, the play script. Bush-Bailey and Bratton draw not only on Roach’s interest in cultural memory and embodiment but also on dance historian Susan Foster’s (1995) work on the body to argue the case for practice-based historical research focussed not on reconstruction, but on revival, revitalising past performance for the present.

As I do in performing *Myrrha*, Bush-Bailey and Bratton favour an interactive approach to past and present, emphasizing ‘the movement between present and past, one in which archive and act, fragment and body [...] work in provocative interaction’ (Franko and Richards 2000: 1). Just as for me, using an ancient (effectively missing, presumed ‘dead’) theatre form as a springboard to contemporary performance, for Bush-Bailey and Bratton, there are no ‘living’ memories of their chosen form either:

but there are, as Roach, as powerfully argues, many forms of cultural memory, ‘defined by the French historian Pierre Nora as “true memory”’, found in ‘gestures and habits, in skills passed down by unspoken traditions, in the body’s inherent self-knowledge, in unstudied reflexes and ingrained memories.’ (Roach 1996: 26 cited by Bush-Bailey and Bratton in Kershaw and Nicholson 2011: 102)

As Bush-Bailey and Bratton point out, Roach’s nomination of the term ‘kinaesthetic imagination’ is particularly useful to such explorations of performance history and memory. He responds to Susan Foster’s (1996) work on the language of dance as separable from the dancer, as ‘a kinaesthetic vocabulary, one that can move [...] from one generation to the other’ (Roach 1996: 26-7). The idea is an interesting one: in performing *Myrrha*, a kinaesthetic imagination is most certainly activated. I am tapping into a bodily archive on many layers: the embodiment of an ancient Roman text (an episode from Ovid’s epic poem *Metamorphoses*), an embodied history of Roman dance theatre, and the re-embodiment of my own bodily and somatic history as a woman who has herself given birth. I find it useful here to cite Susan Foster’s concept of ‘bodily writing’ (1995: 4): there are physical traces⁸² in the body, series of material remains, or remnants of the past, within our contemporary somatic expression. Writing on Lukin Linklater’s choreography *Woman and Water* in 2011, Foster clarifies her earlier thinking on this, relating bodily ‘remnants’ to the process of remembering that occurs through the dance:

Memories are not stored in the body; rather, a process of remembering is cultivated in the body [...] the dance constructs this new ground through its

⁸² ‘Traces’ is a significant and loaded term, that perhaps warrants further investigation – see Franko and Richards’ consideration of the differences in Derrida’s use of ‘mark’ and ‘trace’ in relation to the past, extending Derrida’s argument beyond spoken language to the concerns of performance studies, and stating that ‘traces may fade completely, but marks tend to remain, like scars, yet without immediate reference to the present [...] Marks are, in the most mundane sense, the archives themselves [...]’ (Franko and Richards 2000: 5).

practice of re-membling, sowing the past into the present in order that it might be regrown. (Foster 2011: 186-7)

I find Foster's summation of dance as a practice of re-membling an important one as it paves the way for an understanding of my own dance practice in the museum as a practice of remembering ancient history, a 'sowing' of previously dismembered female stories into the present so that they be allowed to flourish.

In *Myrrha*, another writing intersects with this 'bodily writing' and that is Ovid's. The choreographic process always begins with reading Ovid's text. I read it in both English and Latin. For example, Ovid's text about Myrrha's transformation and her labouring can almost be read as a set of somatic instructions for the dancer:

*nam crura loquentis
terra supervenit, ruptosque obliqua per ungues
porrigitur radix, longi firmamina trunci;
ossaque robur agunt, mediaque manente medulla
sanguis in sucos, in magnos brachia ramos,
in parvos digiti, duratur cortice pellis.
Iamque gravem crescens uterum perstrinxerat arbor
pectoraque obruerat collumque operire parabat,
non tulit illa moram venientique obvia ligno
subsedit mersitque suos in cortice vultus.*

While she was still speaking, the soil covered her shins; roots, breaking from her toes, spread sideways, supporting a tall trunk; her bones strengthened, and in the midst of the remaining marrow, the blood became sap; her arms became long branches; her fingers, twigs; her skin, solid bark. And now the growing tree had drawn together over her ponderous belly, buried her breasts, and was beginning to encase her neck: she could not bear the wait, and she sank down against the wood, to meet it, and plunged her face into the bark. (Ovid, *Met* 10.481-498, trans. Kline [2000: unpaginated])

The sheer physicality communicated through Ovid's language was especially helpful in how I originally 'translated' Myrrha's transformation into the tree into my own body. Through the choreographic process, the physicality of the ancient text coincided with a 'bodily writing' as I improvised around the changing quality of the body, of bone, of blood, of muscle – feeling skin hardening, bones hardening, sensing the

liquidity of marrow and blood flowing like sap, sinking down to meet the rising wood, yielding to it, giving in (see video, from 19:48 onwards). The ancient written text becomes re-embodied, translated through the dancing body. I used a similar process for the moment of Adonis' birth: Ovid evokes the '*dat gemitus arbor*' [the groan of the tree] (*Met.* 10. 509) and the '*fissa cortice*' [the bark ripping open] (*Met.* 10.512). My body re-physicalises the already physical text - the creaking of the tree, the bark cleaving open (see video, at 22:16) – and at the same time, being the archive of my own lived history with its own bodily writing⁸³, remembers what it is like to be a woman in labour and to look upon one's child for the first time. Despite the tree / object transformation, I hope through the dance to embody Myrrha's humanity. In so many ways, the performance of *Myrrha* becomes another, alternative archive for the ancient dance form. It is a kinaesthetic and imaginative engagement with performance history, as well as the living archive of my own dancer's and female body. As a performance,

it lives in the present moment yet at the same time each new performance carries traces of the previous times I have danced it. In dancing *Myrrha*, my body is a living, breathing archive of multiple presents, of multiple presences, a palimpsest of tenses and temporalities. (Crawley 2018b: 174-5)

⁸³ This idea of 'bodily writing' can in turn be related to Helen Thomas' argument for dance as a metaphor for 'writing the body' (Thomas 2003: 173), especially in her critique of Wolff (1995) on the work of French feminists Hélène Cixous (1975 [1981]), *écriture féminine* (Moi, 1985) and Luce Irigaray (1985), and the potential of the dancing body to transgress the dominant (patriarchal) social order. In terms of my own project, it is especially interesting that Thomas expands her argument to a reading of Ann Daly's 1992 and 1995 studies of Isadora Duncan, given Duncan's connections to looking towards ancient Greece and classical sculpture in the archaeological museum as sources for her modernist dancing body that 'refused to be co-opted by the gaze' (Thomas 2003: 171).



Fig. 8: *Myrrha*, Ashmolean Museum, 2018. Photograph: Brandon Kahn

As Bush-Bailey and Bratton remind us, a sense of performance practice as ‘embodied palimpsest through which earlier approaches might be perceived in current practice’ (Kershaw and Nicholson 2011: 104) has antecedents, such as French theatre director Jacques Copeau’s striking definition of his work as one of ‘dramatic renovation [...] a peeling away of layer upon layer of overpainting’ (Rudlin 2000: 55). This can in turn be connected back to Franko and Richards’ reading of those Derridean ‘marks’ which ‘remain, persist and return [...] the archives themselves’ (Franko and Richards 2000: 5 – see above p.120, fn. 91). I might then ask where those marks are inscribed on my dancing body: the marks of the memory of previous practice, of training, of embodied theatre and dance history, the marks of a cultural memory of an ancient dance-theatre form somehow ‘translated’ onto a contemporary, dancing body in the moment of performance, which acts somewhat as a *déjà-vu*, ‘a thinking through movements at once remembered *and* reinvented’ (Roach 1996: 27, my emphasis). I wonder especially how the marks of my own dance and theatre training – not only in ballet and Graham technique, but more notably in training in

mime techniques from Marcel Marceau (1923-2007) who was one of my own teachers – and which have inevitably informed certain movement choices in *Myrrha*, connect to the transmission of the cultural memory of a wider mime / dance-theatre tradition and the place of *tragoedia saltata* within that tradition. And yet more significantly, this moment of déjà-vu, of remembering movements whilst constantly reinventing them, is on display, for when I perform *Myrrha* in the museum, I am also exhibit. My body is the site of re-collection whilst becoming part – at least, temporarily - of the museum collection.

With the very first performances of *Myrrha* in the Ashmolean's cast gallery in 2015, the dancing body entered an exhibited collection of ancient sculptures and artefacts from the Roman world, or, more interestingly, a collection of eighteenth-century replicas of ancient artefacts. I was performing in a cast gallery where the surrounding sculptures are not the ancient Roman originals. The cast gallery provides an interesting context: here I dance, surrounded by replica sculptures, by effigies. I am reminded of Roach's use of the term 'effigy' as a verb meaning to 'invoke an absence, to body something forth, especially from the distant past' (Roach 1996: 36, citing the OED reference for this description). As Roach argues:

Beyond ostensibly inanimate effigies fashioned from wood and cloth, there are more elusive but more powerful effigies fashioned from flesh. Such effigies are made by performances. They consist of a set of actions that hold open a place in memory into which many different people step according to circumstances and occasions. (ibid)

In performing *Myrrha* in the cast gallery of the Ashmolean, I am – according to Roach's formulation, at least - an effigy of flesh, moving among fixed effigies of marble, re-imagining, recreating and reinventing Roman dance as part of 'our' contemporary twenty-first century cultural memory. The idea for me, as for Bush-

Bailey and Bratton before me, is not of reconstruction but of revival, of ‘ “bringing back to life”, restoring lost, or merely unused, vigour and consciousness – the elements Roach identifies in kinaesthetic memory’ (Kershaw and Nicholson 2011: 107). But what does revival mean? It is remembering, re-living, making alive again:

Whereas reconstruction ignores the present in seeking to rebuild from the past, ‘revival’ acknowledges the present and works to reawaken that which can be brought into use again. Revival seeks to connect with the past through present consciousness (ibid).

So, in the performance of *Myrrha* in the museum, I am connecting with the past (body as counter-memory, as alternative archive) through the present moment(s) of moving, ‘reviving’ an ancient dance form while simultaneously exploring new modalities for contemporary performance. Or, in performing *Myrrha* in the cast gallery, am I just another replica? Am I in fact remembering or dismembering an ancient form? If I am dismembering it, then I am quite literally tearing it apart, breaking it down and fragmenting it in order to reassemble it in another way. Performance in the museum thereby becomes a process of reassembling scattered fragments and

even when the pieces are joined together again, the cracks are still (perhaps evermore) present. Between the reassembled fragments appear gaps and lacunae, those spaces between, which offer the possibility for unrealized potential histories to form and appear. (Crawley 2018b: 175)

At this point, I would like to suggest that in the performing of *Myrrha* it is the mask that both accepts and bridges these gaps: the gaps between the sculptural and the live, the material and the immaterial, the tangible and the intangible, the object and the body, the past and present. The mask offers a valuable potentiality, a state of between-ness. Its very neutrality, the fact that it is a neutral mask,⁸⁴ ensures this potentiality: I remain in the present, but at the same time this mask is *Myrrha*’s own mask, the mask

⁸⁴ Admittedly, we know very little about the mask used by the original ancient Roman dance artists. The following chapter (see especially p.134ff) includes a fuller discussion of my use of the mask in relation to the performance masks of antiquity.

of a woman from the ancient past, the mask of shame. The contradiction of the masked body, at once paradoxically both fleshy and alive and sculptural object, white as the plaster effigies in the cast gallery in which I perform, offers this important potentiality for a state of between-ness.

The choice of the neutral mask as a performative mask is significant. In choosing it, I am consciously breaking actor, mime and theatre teacher Jacques Lecoq (1921-1999)'s conventions. For Lecoq, the neutral mask is a pedagogical tool to take the performer back to the beginning in order to cast off personal idiosyncrasies and to rediscover how to use the body. It is categorically not a performance mask. The fact that I perform *Myrrha* with the neutral mask means a constant negotiation between off-balance extremes of emotion (grief, shame, desperation) and the neutral, 'centred' body that exists before all action. The mask therefore forces me to be in a constant state of receptivity to the present moment. It pushes me to be present precisely because, as Lecoq reminds us:

Le masque neutre développe essentiellement la présence de l'acteur à l'espace qu'il environne. Il le met en état de découverte, d'ouverture, de disponibilité à recevoir.

[The neutral mask essentially develops the presence of the actor in the space around them, placing them in a state of discovery, of open-ness, of availability, of being able to receive] (Lecoq 2007: 49, my translation).

In addition, the neutral mask has no one, fixed expression, which means that it is capable of every expression.

Denied of emotions that can be read in facial expressions, the neutral mask puts the emphasis on the embodiment of emotion in different parts of the body, which paradoxically seems to make the audience 'see' a range of emotions (passion, shame,

despair, Myrrha's first and only smile at her new-born child) flicker across the face of the mask, even though these facial expressions cannot, in reality, actually be there. As well as revealing the extreme, somewhat alien, physicality of the piece, the mask expresses Myrrha's very human vulnerability. In rehearsal, I sometimes attempted to play Myrrha without the mask and when doing so I felt very vulnerable as a performer. When I put on the mask, I am able to let go of my own performer's vulnerability and allow Myrrha's vulnerability to surface. The mask also ensures that this vulnerability is sited in the body, or at least ensures a shift in the viewer's focus to the performer's body. Furthermore,

in a solo that narrates a very female experience of the body and that stages pregnancy, childbirth and maternity, the mask, paradoxically fleshy and alive, reclaims a site for the *live* female body within the context of both the ancient form and the epic text. (Crawley 2018b: 176)

With every character I choose to perform, I deliberately start work by choosing an energy source that is clearly located in some specific part of the body from which a character's energy radiates out, and it is this energy source located in that centre that leads the rest of the body through space. Emotion is not excluded from this process but is at its very core: I try to make an emotional as well as a physical commitment to that centre. Myrrha's centre is unsurprisingly located in her womb, and with some sense of kinaesthetic empathy audiences have often remarked, without knowing about my process of working from movement centres, that they have felt the energy of the performance resonate in their viscera too. They 'feel' the burden that Myrrha carries in her womb, the child conceived in darkness, the weight of her shame. In such a way, *Myrrha* is a visceral work, in the truest sense of the word. The ancient form is no longer missing, presumed dead; Myrrha is no longer missing,

presumed dead. She is alive and present in every performance, ‘her flesh my flesh, resonating not only in my body but also in the bodies of the spectators’ (ibid).

At the Ashmolean in 2015, *Myrrha*’s museum situation provided the performance with an interesting series of juxtapositions. Just outside the performance space of the cast gallery, in the adjoining gallery, is a Roman fresco from the Golden House of Nero which depicts Myrrha giving birth to Adonis. Viewers passed by the fresco immediately before entering the performance space, and so there were, in fact, multiple Myrrhas existing in multiple tenses: in one gallery, the fixed, the painted, the already archived, and in the next, the live, the mobile, the dancing, in the process of being re-archived. In the painted fresco, Myrrha is represented, post-transformation, by just the thin branch of a tree, non-human and almost non-existent, being pushed into the background, a prop for the considerably fleshier goddess Aphrodite to hold (see figure 10 below) as Lucina, the goddess of childbirth, offers her the newborn Adonis. Through my dancing body, Myrrha’s female, fleshy body is foregrounded again as it goes through labour and childbirth. Moreover, this process of re-archiving through the dance was also on display as performance and, for the gathered audience in the cast gallery, provided an event-space for a collective ritual. As such, it was arguably a very public form of remembrance, of re-collection.

This chapter has introduced my choreographic practice-as-research, relating choreographing in the museum to ideas of remembering (and dis-membering) and how we might be able to ‘re-collect’ history through dance performance in the museum. I have argued for ‘performance as archive’ as a methodology for historical research, by charting the early development of the solo fragment, *Myrrha*. The next

chapter will begin to unpick my practice further, looking in particular at exactly how the mask functions in these processes of dancing, of remembering and of recollecting. But before moving on, I wish to take one last moment to remember Myrrha.

Behind my glass, I pace about the empty space. This is Myrrha's space, a desert space; it is empty and lonely. My feet move quickly, move in circles and figures of eight, trying to escape but always returning to the same place. Then, all at once, there is a heavy feeling in the belly; hands fly to the womb, body drops to the floor. As body hits the floor and begins to rise again, there is a changing quality of blood, of bone, a rooting to the ground, first through palm and forearm, then through the tiny bones of the feet. I feel skin hardening; I feel the liquidity of marrow and blood flowing like sap, sinking down to meet the rising wood, yielding to it, giving in. As I dance, my body re-fleshes Ovid's written text; Myrrha's story pulls me onward, my hands once more rooting to the ground beneath my feet, fingers reaching outwards as roots grow ever deeper. The rigidity travels throughout my body, extending upwards through feet, shin, knee, thigh, pelvis, torso, shoulder, arms branching out, neck and skull stiffening until I cannot escape the shifting of weight downwards any longer and suddenly in one breath there she is: Myrrha, woman made tree, immobilised yet somehow still moving, branches gently dancing in the breeze.

- Myrrha rehearsal notes, June 2017



Fig. 9: *Myrrha* (2015), performance in the Cast Gallery, Ashmolean Museum.
Photograph: Ian Wallman / Ashmolean Museum



Fig. 10: Fresco showing *Myrrha* from the Golden House of Nero. Found in Rome in 1668, now in the Ashmolean Museum. Photograph: Carole Raddato.

6. Masking the Dance, Unmasking History?

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I began to propose my dance practice in the museum as a story of fragmentary replicas, a story of how the piecing together and exhibiting of scattered fragments through performance can highlight the cracks of history. It is through these cracks, these spaces in-between, these spatio-temporal gaps, that previously unrealized potential stories – the ‘anecdotal’, the very opposite of the received *grand récit* – begin to seep through. How my own gesturing, and yet fragmented, body becomes a site for this potential seeping is now a question best unpicked through further discussion of the practice itself. This chapter will address how the mask – an important element of my practice – relates to the idea of the fragmented body. It will trace ideas of the tragic mask in ancient performance, and its reception in twentieth century performance, through to the use of the neutral mask in my own dance practice for the museum. I ask: is it the masked dancing body in the museum that becomes the meeting-point where the cracks of history are held up to the light, and somehow bridged without being entirely effaced?

Face to face with the mask

The mask stares back at me; eyes wide open, it returns my gaze.

The mouth too is wide open, aghast, screaming silently.

The mouth is speaking to me but I struggle to hear the words.

I struggle to hear the scream.

At first, the mask's expression seems frozen. I think of a moment fixed in time, a petrification at the moment of horror, but the light in the gallery is shifting.

I look closer, and bring my face towards it.

The gallery light casts shadows around the eyes, shadows that flicker across the terracotta surface of the mask. In the shifting, flickering light, the expression seems to change, to follow my gaze. It seems to be watching me.

The surface is chipped in places, pockmarked, imperfect. This is an old face.

This is the face of the turning of time, looking forwards and looking back.

- Rehearsal notes, January 2017

It was during a visit to the Ashmolean's galleries of Roman and Greek artefacts in the Ashmolean in January 2017 that my eyes were drawn to a life-size terracotta mask dating to either the first century BCE or the first century CE, and labelled as a mask of tragedy (figure 11). Following the 2015 performances of *Myrrha* in the cast gallery, I was once again working in the Ashmolean, this time as part of a six-month residency with the APGRD to create a new choreographic work which became the starting-point for *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*. By examining the use of the mask in both ancient and contemporary performance, the principal aim of the residency was to first consider through my own practice-as-research what role the mask plays in my choreographic work and from there to discover what both the history and potentiality of the mask might bring to dance performance in the archaeological museum. It was no surprise, then, as I wandered among the ancient fragments on display in the museum, that the terracotta theatre mask drew me towards it. Yet, as I looked more closely at the mask, scrutinizing its shape, form and material, I realized that this was no actual theatre mask. This was a terracotta replica of one.



Fig. 11: Terracotta tragic mask dating to the first century BCE, Ashmolean Museum.
Photograph: Carole Raddato.

No actual theatre mask dating from ancient times survives: masks were made of perishable materials, a mix of linen and material akin to *papier mâché*, and so any originals have not survived the centuries. All we have left of them are sculptural copies. As I stared into the blank eyes of the terracotta replica, it seemed in itself to be

a *mise-en-abyme* of the gap between the ephemeral and the archival that had been forming a background to my dance practice in the archaeological museum. The terracotta mask on display suddenly seemed to ‘personify’ my question: might it in fact be the mask itself that accepts - and bridges - the gaps between? Is my dance performance in the museum an interlocutor, existing in that ‘somewhere between’?

This chapter will, I hope, offer a potential answer to this question. It will also explore the three main strands of enquiry that emerged from my practice with the mask throughout the APGRD residency. The first is how the mask enables me as performer to return the spectator’s gaze. The ancient Greek word for mask, *πρόσωπον* [*prosōpon*], means ‘before the gaze’ and, as theatre historian David Wiles (2007: 1) reminds us, the gaze under scrutiny might equally belong to the seer or she who is being seen.⁸⁵ This trope of a slippage from seer to seen was common in the ancient world; a world where ‘I am’ coincides with ‘who I am seen to be’ (cf. Frontisi-Ducroux 1995: 10-34). This duality of being both before the gaze and presenting or returning it, of being seen and also seeing, appeals to the broader feminist framework of my wider practice in the museum. Again, I think about the potential of the moving, dancing female body in the museum to allow certain buried female histories to surface and be ‘re-collected’. Again, I think of the live, dancing female body in the museum as having the metaphorical potential to smash the glass encasing her; the female body effectively freeing herself, through the live dance, from the constraints of her display box. I think of how the living female dancer in the museum might subvert the idea of the female body as exhibited object on display and historically subjected to the ‘gaze’,

⁸⁵ It is useful to recall that the ancient Greek word for theatre is *θέατρον* [*theatron*], quite literally ‘the place where ‘we look at.’ It is the place of seeing.

to use Laura Mulvey's frequently cited but still useful (1975⁸⁶) term, of the male collector. How does my dance practice in the museum create this subversion? Can it occur through somehow finding a means to return the onlooker's gaze from behind the glass? Is it the mask that offers this means?

Evolving quite naturally from this first point, a further question has been to explore the type of mask that might enable this subversion to take place. Over the course of the research, although my practice has emerged from 're-imaginings' of a Roman dance theatre form, I have found myself moving away from the Roman pantomime mask and towards the ancient Greek tragic mask. There are vital differences between these masks, even in the language used to describe them: the ancient Greek 'πρόσωπον' [*prosōpon*] means 'before the gaze,' and the Latin '*persona*' denotes the character that we present to the world. By looking at the visual evidence that we have from the classical world, in terracotta replica masks and in the pictorial representation of masks on ancient vases and in mosaics, we can see that the tragic mask from the fourth and fifth centuries BCE is rather plain, in contrast to the exaggerated, agonized masks from Hellenistic and Roman times. Roman and Hellenistic masks tend to have more elaborate features, clearly demarcating characteristics (even character or *persona*), whereas the fourth and fifth century BCE tragic mask is much more neutral. I am interested in what this neutrality might give me as performer.

⁸⁶ As I have argued above (chapter three, p. 68), Mulvey is a seminal reference point, and it is useful to note that although the female 'on display' predates Mulvey's feminist analysis of the gaze and was subjected to her passive 'being looked at-ness' much earlier, since feminist discourse arrived, this reading is now even more potent.

Finally, when we look at the pictorial evidence of the tragic mask on ancient pots and vases,⁸⁷ what is striking is that very rarely do we see performers wearing the masks. Rather, they are holding them in the hands either about to put them on or having just taken them off. Sometimes the performers are looking intently at their masks, their gaze focused towards them. The viewer of the vase is then looking at the performer looking at the mask looking back at them, and so the viewer's gaze is in turn directed to the mask's gaze back at the performer. I began to ask how I might mine these layers of looking and looking back in acts of masking and unmasking. What might happen if the act of masking and unmasking was itself part of the performance? How might this affect the return of the gaze?

The Ancient Tragic Mask

Holding the mask in my hands, at first I am hesitant, looking, wondering.

A sudden move and I assume the mask.

Lie prone on my back, corpse-like.

I think of death, and of a burial.

And yet I am breathing. My chest rises and falls.

What does the mask do the body?

To how I as mover perceive my body?

To how you as viewer perceive my body?

⁸⁷ The most famous of all images of Athenian theatre is the Pronomos vase in Naples, a large *krater* (a vase used for mixing down wine), dated to the end of the fifth century BCE. I am especially indebted to Oliver Taplin and Rosie Wyles' edited volume, *The Pronomos Vase and its Contexts* (2010), and to Oliver Taplin at the APGRD for his illuminating conversations on the representation of the tragic mask on ancient vases and his guidance in finding pictorial representations of ancient Greek theatre masks (cf. Webster, 1967; Kachler, Aebi and Brunner, 2003; Hart, 2010).

To how you as viewer perceive your own body?

What does the mask do to my breath?

What does the mask do to my inner music?

Does the mask change the ways in which I communicate?

Does it change the ways in which the viewer receives movement and communication?

What does the action of putting on the mask reveal?

What does the action of unmasking reveal?

- Rehearsal notes, March 2017

As my practice is rooted in a re-imagining of an ancient classical form, in order to understand the potentiality of the tragic theatre mask, it seems important to first look back to its history and, in particular, the function and aesthetics of Roman and Greek theatre masks. The area of masks is surprisingly under-researched by scholars of ancient theatre, and even less so from a practitioner or performer's point of view, although there have been various theories about the tragic mask advanced from classical scholars and theatre historians, notably Stephen Halliwell (1993), David Wiles (2004; 2007) and Oliver Taplin (2015). First, it is important to understand that the tragic mask was invented for Attic tragedy and is therefore inseparable from tragedy, bound to its very origins. We must also acknowledge some purely anecdotal reasons for the mask – that it allowed for one performer to play a multiplicity of roles and enhanced visibility in the large auditoria of ancient Greek and Roman outdoor theatres by effectively 'amplifying' the performer's body. We must also acknowledge what Taplin (2015) terms as 'the anthropological package', a

focus on the transformation rituals connected to the origins of Greek theatre where the mask allows the 'other' to surface. This a theory much espoused by Wiles (2007) who claims that the act of masked performance is itself an act of spiritual possession by the god Dionysos. However, in contrast to Wiles and pointing to the highly crafted nature of tragedy, Taplin argues that the mask was not necessarily a throwback to a more ancient Dionysiac ritual but, more interestingly, marked the move from the storyteller of the Homeric oral poetry tradition to the actor who plays the narrative out (what Taplin terms 'enactment'):

Before there was full enactment there was no theatre: once it happened, there was [...] My hypothesis is that enactment and mask were both invented together, inextricably. They are both revolutionary inventions rather than vestiges of some more primitive pre-dramatic [i.e. Dionysiac] ritual. So the rationale of the mask is not religious or mind-changing; it is artistic, aesthetic, theatrical. (Taplin 2015: unpaginated)

For Taplin, the mask is the marker of enactment. His second argument is that the mask opened up permission for the wearer/performer to embody a range of characteristics that would, without a mask, be unacceptable. We might think of Euripides' Medea, the murdering mother, for example, or the changes in gender or status that occurred in the act of playing tragedy, e.g. the male actor playing a woman, a citizen playing a slave or a foreigner. What Taplin is suggesting is that when the hugely important leap was taken from narrative to enactment, it was necessary to signal that this was enactment inside a theatre-frame that was also outside of the realm of ordinary life, and that the wearer was now a performer and not an ordinary citizen. It was the mask that enabled this signaling. Taplin's convincing conclusion is that the mask enabled theatre to come into existence in the first place, allowing performers to enact any kind of role: 'no mask, no theatre: the mask was not only the emblem of theatre, it was its permission to exist' (ibid). In terms of my own practice with the mask, I am less enamoured of Wiles' idea of possession than his notion of

transformation: I feel very much in control of my own performance, although I aim to fully ‘incarnate’ (in the sense of ‘giving flesh to’⁸⁸) the movement or the character or the story that the movement is telling. In tandem with this, I am also drawn to Taplin’s idea of the permissive quality of the mask. Many of the stories of ancient women that I explore in my dance practice - from Myrrha to Medusa to Philomela - deal with narratives of incest, murder and rape. They are stories that have been told throughout the centuries by male voices; their female voices and bodies have been denied them, and these women have not been given permission to tell their stories. Might the mask give me, the twenty-first century dancer, the permission to tell their story from their perspective, and to give them back a body with which to express it? Might my masked, dancing body become the site of the ‘enactment,’ the embodiment, the incarnation of their story? I am aware of something of a paradox at work here: the mask is the site where theatre is legitimated, and my masked dance in turn gives legitimacy to classical women’s stories, but to twenty-first century viewing eyes, the mask could also be considered not only to reveal but also to again partially conceal the reality of their experience. There is an interesting tension in the mask both in giving permission – to the stories of women in the past, and to myself as dancer-conveyor of their experiences – whilst also potentially denying them (and myself). As I will further argue below, this is a tension that is at least partially resolved through my use of the *neutral* mask, the mask of no one and of everyone. For if the mask conceals and the face of the past (and the performer) is blank, this blankness is also openness, a vast potentiality enabling twenty-first century viewers to see everything – including themselves - reflected on its surface. Paradoxically, it is in concealing that the mask reveals.

⁸⁸ See above *Introduction*, p. 20 fn. 21.

The Reception of Ancient Masks in Modern Performance

During the first stages of my residency at the APGRD, I was also able to make use of the extensive archives of film and photographic material and other ephemera housed there to explore a rich variety of productions of Greek tragedy from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that have used mask-work to considerable effect.⁸⁹ In particular, I chose to research Eva Palmer-Sikelianos' *Prometheus Bound* (1927) made on the occasion of the very first revival of the Delphic Festival in the ancient theatre of Delphi, Greece, and remounted at the second Delphic Festival in 1930; Igor Stravinsky and Jean Cocteau's 1927 *Oedipus Rex*; Jean-Louis Barrault's *L'Orestie* which was staged in Paris in 1955; and Peter Hall's *Oresteia* (1981) and *Bacchai* (2002) for the National Theatre, London. These seminal productions stretch over the course of the whole of the twentieth century and the ways in which they use masks vary considerably, but with each of them I was able to trace the connection between the sculptural and the statuary on the one hand, and the performative and the mobile on the other, that the tragic mask appears to offer. I was thereby also able to begin to develop an understanding of the potential of the tragic mask for dance performance in the museum. Taken together, these five productions provide a wider background to my own movement research with the mask which itself is in the lineage of Lecoq's work on the neutral mask, as well as my previous practical experience with other character masks (from *commedia dell'arte* and Balinese Topeng dance theatre) during my years (2003-2009) as a performer with Ariane Mnouchkine's Théâtre du Soleil, a company well known for its mask-work.

⁸⁹ My thanks are due to Claire Kenward, APGRD archivist-researcher, for her invaluable help in tracing the trajectory of the tragic mask throughout twentieth century productions of Greek tragedies.

In the context of my own work in the museum, it is enlightening to look at the ways in which these practitioners – Barrault and Hall in particular - articulate their work with masks in terms of the both sculptural and the statuary, and the mobile and the performative. This seems especially useful for a study of dance in an archaeological museum, where I, dancer, am surrounded by sculptural artefacts. It also cannot be ignored that Eva Palmer-Sikelianos' 1927 masked *Prometheus Bound* was itself influenced by the work of dancers Isadora Duncan (c.1877 – 1927), Loïe Fuller (1862-1928) and Ted Shawn (1891-1972) and that, concerning dance in the archaeological museum, there are important antecedents for my practice in the work of Duncan and Fuller. In both Palmer-Sikelianos' work at Delphi, and Duncan's in the British Museum, there is something about animation - and re-animation, or, to use a fitting allusion drawn from classical antiquity, about Pygmalion's statue Galatea coming to life (which itself would form the basis to one of the fragments of *Likely Terpsichore?*).⁹⁰ Palmer-Sikelianos' masks, designed by sculptor Hélène Sardeau (for an example, see figure 12), also drew on the Greek iconography of statues and ancient vases, and the actor-dancers who wore them quite literally *reanimated* this iconography.

French dramatist Jean Cocteau (1889-1963) and composer Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)'s *Oedipus Rex* - performed in Paris in the very same year as Palmer-Sikelianos' *Prometheus* - used masks to do the exact opposite. Their idea was that the sculptural quality of masks would turn actors into statues, or archaeological relics, and the immobility of the actors and the physical stillness that marked the production reinforced this. In addition, these masks spoke a 'dead' language (Latin). As Wiles

⁹⁰ This is a trope that also occurs in silent films of the same period such as *Purity* (1917) and that also use much classical iconography and/or narratives. I am grateful to classics scholar Pantelis Michelakis for bringing my attention to the relationship of this trope to dance (see also Michelakis 2018: 192-212).

argues quite forcefully, ‘the mask in this production was not something that animated the body, but something that betokened immobility and death’ (Wiles 2004: 250). Almost thirty years later, it was French theatre director Jean-Louis Barrault (1910-1994) who tried to reconcile the ideas of animation and stillness (which he interestingly begins to term ‘life’ and ‘death’⁹¹) offered by the tragic mask in his masked production of *L’Orestie*. As he later recalled about the work:

A mask confers upon a given expression the maximum of intensity together with an impression of absence. A mask expresses at the same time the maximum of life and the maximum of death; it partakes of the visible and of the invisible, of the apparent and absolute. The mask exteriorizes a deep aspect of life, and in so doing, it helps to rediscover instinct [...] But [in *L’Orestie*] we did not try to imitate statues. There is in the look of masks something visionary, while on the contrary statues have a kind of fixed and blank stare. (Barrault 1961: 76-7)

Interestingly, Barrault’s contrast of the ‘visionary’ (alive) expression of the mask as opposed to the ‘fixed’ and ‘blank’ (lifeless) stare of the statue calls to mind a description by Wiles about an encounter with the same terracotta theatre mask at the Ashmolean described at the beginning of this chapter:

The mouth seemed to close when viewed from above, and the cylindrical holes bored into the iris changed the shape of the eye when the angle of vision changed. In the same room I could turn my eyes to a Roman copy of a bronze head by the fifth –century sculptor Polycleitus. The serene, meditative expression of the bronze face appeared constant, while the theatrical mask kept changing its expression, and *the transcendence of time stood in contrast to the art of mutability*. (Wiles, 2007: 56, my emphasis)

Both Barrault and Wiles point to a feature of the mask as being mutable, changeable, and alive. For even when it is not being worn by a performer, the mask on display has something of the vital, of the visionary. It is a potentially animate object that has the power to look back at the viewer.

⁹¹ In a practice-as-research workshop praxis session on the neutral mask that I facilitated for fellow PhD candidates at C-DaRE in March 2017, participants spoke of ‘deadness’ of the mask and the ‘aliveness’ of the body, and pointed to tensions between the mask’s neutrality (or ‘elasticity’) and intensity of felt (and performed) emotion.

But, how does the tragic mask achieve this? Theatre director Peter Hall (1930-2017), who used masks to enormous effect in his seminal production of Aeschylus' trilogy, the *Oresteia*, for the National Theatre (UK) in 1981 and then in his production of Euripides' *Bacchae* in 2002 (again for the National), goes some way to articulate this. Hall's formalist approach, with the mask as a form that releases rather than hides, and that enables rather than inhibits, seems to reverse Barrault's idea of 'blankness.' Hall points to the ambiguity of the tragic mask, or what I, following Lecoq, might term its 'neutrality,'⁹² as the very feature that gives it its quality of aliveness. He contrasts the tragic mask to the later Hellenistic and Roman masks with their exaggerations and defined characteristics:

The Greek mask was enigmatic, uncertain. They were soft, flexible [...] and always ambiguous. Their humanity was enigmatic. They waited to be printed with the emotion of the actor [...] The ambiguous mask, fully used, is often much more expressive than the human face because it is dealing with the quintessence of emotions. (Hall 2000: 28)

The masks for Hall's *Oresteia*, designed by Jocelyn Herbert, drew on Greek iconography, as those of Eva Palmer-Sikelanos did in the 1920s, but also on this principle of ambiguity, or neutrality. In their neutrality, they clearly speak to the tradition of Lecoq's work. As I outlined in the previous chapter (see p. 125), it is important to remember that for Lecoq the neutral mask is not a performance mask. However, in my own work in the museum, from very early on I had been using a neutral mask first in practice and then in performance too. By using the mask in performance, I effectively subvert Lecoq's vision of the neutral mask; it is no longer a training tool, but rather something that enables a transformative experience within the specific site of the archaeological museum. For me, the power of the neutral mask in

⁹² In fact, as Wiles (2007) argues, perhaps the closest we have to the Greek tragic mask is in fact Lecoq's neutral mask.

performance lies in its very neutrality: precisely because of its blankness, it can become the face of Everywoman. It can become the face of the Ashmolean's mummified Romano-Egyptian 'unknown woman'; it can become the face of Myrrha, of Galatea, of Medusa, of Philomela.

Fig. 12: Mask for Eva Palmer-Sikelianos' *Prometheus Bound* (1930 revival of original 1927 production, Delphic Festival), created by Hélène Sardeau.
Photograph: Benaki Museum Photographic Archive.

Fig. 13: Orestes mask for Peter Hall's 1981 *Oresteia*, designed by Jocelyn Herbert for actor Greg Hicks. Photograph: The Jocelyn Herbert Archive.

Furthermore, Hall also describes the tragic mask as 'a magnifying glass, helping us to scrutinize emotion' (Hall 2000: 28-9). His metaphor points back to the idea of the gaze, of acts of viewing, of looking. The performer too is engaged in this act of scrutinizing the mask even before she puts it on. In describing their work with the mask for the *Oresteia* for a television documentary in 1983, Hall's actors consistently articulate how they first engaged with the mask by looking at it. For example, chorus actor Tony Robinson describes how in an early stage of rehearsal with the mask, he would first 'look at it, try and let [my] imagination play on it, get a

bit of affection for it, turn to mirror, put it on.’⁹³ Speaking about the same rehearsal process, Jocelyn Herbert, the production’s designer and mask-maker, herself emphasises how the performer should not look in the mirror but that the *Oresteia*’s actors at first ‘all did and they tended to get movement and things from the mirror and ethically, you know, with these masks you should get it [the movement] from the mask’ (ibid). In other words, it is the act of looking at the mask that will give rise to movement. In the same television documentary, Greg Hicks, the actor who played Orestes in Hall’s production, attempts to articulate this process, his Orestes’ mask in hand:

I looked at the mask for a long time, lived with it and it produced the characteristics in me, I didn’t impose the characteristics on it [Hicks puts the mask on] Okay, when I’ve put the mask on, the mask impels me, to move my body to move in a certain way, because it’s a very angular mask, if I make a gesture, if I put my head to one side, then my body wants to follow, the body wants to go with the mask. It’s not something I can explain but for me I couldn’t, I have to move in a particular way, because the mask impels me to move that way. If I stand up, I can’t just stand up like that, somehow the mask, I have to stand with some kind of control. There’s something rather, the inflexion is up in this mask, that’s what my body says. (ibid)

Hicks’ description echoes my own experience of how the act of looking at the mask itself directs the movements the body will make. For me, it is the mask - or rather, it is my looking at the mask and then interpreting what it is suggesting to me - that directs the choreography. Significantly, this act of looking at the mask is one reiterated time and time again in classical iconography. The iconographic evidence on vases and pots is that the mask is disembodied, an object that is held or studied, not (yet) animated into a ‘performative’ role. However, the key is that often it is being studied. It is being looked at.

⁹³ Robinson speaking in the television documentary *The Oresteia at Epidauros*, produced and directed by Andrew Snell (Channel 4, 1983).

Acts of Looking and Being Looked At

This is yet another layer of viewing that fits inside the ancient Greek idea of the *θέατρον* as the place of seeing. With the tragic mask, the ancient Greek theatre dramatized a series of acts of looking and being looked at. How might this then transfer to the museum, itself a site of a simultaneously individualized and potentially collective viewing? Of import to my investigation here is classical scholar Peter Meineck's 2011 essay 'The Neuroscience of the Tragic Mask' which examines from the perspective of neuroscience how the tragic mask operated in performance from the perspective of the spectator, and relationships of spatial awareness, empathy and, vitally, face recognition and vision:

If facial recognition, reciprocal eye contact, and mental connectivity to the movements of others are some of the most important ways in which human beings communicate emotional states [...] then what happens when the face is denied by the mask, the eyes hidden and the movement choreographed and heightened? Does the mask challenge normal human neural responses and produce a higher cognitive experience, more dependent on comprehending movement and processing language, and did the fixed and unmoving surface of the mask stimulate a profoundly personal, empathetic, visual experience that deepened the emotional response and accentuated the visceral experience of watching the drama? (Meineck 2011: 114)

Meineck's close examination of iconographic evidence from the fifth century, together with the application of cognitive studies and recent neuroscientific research and the results of performance-based experiments, lays to rest any notion that the Greek tragic mask displayed a fixed, neutral, idealized or unchanging expression. He posits that not only did the tragic mask demand to be watched (ibid: 121), but it also mediated a bi-modal ocular experience that oscillated between foveal (focused) vision and peripheral vision, and in the eyes of the spectators it seemed to possess the ability to change emotions. This mutability of the mask's expression depending on aspect again recalls the 'visionary' aspect of Barrault's masks and Wiles' experience of the terracotta mask in the Ashmolean museum. Interestingly, Meineck concludes that it

was the very ambiguity of the mask that would have prompted highly personal responses in the minds of each individual spectator:

Their neural processing mechanisms would have been stimulated by the context of what was presented, and then fired to create a deeply personal emotional image. In this way, the visual ambiguity of the mask greatly enhanced the presentation of tragedy. Thus, the tragic mask was far more powerful than the real face of an actor, as it constantly changed, reflecting the emotional realities of each person sitting before its compelling gaze. (Meineck 2011: 150-1)

Echoing Taplin, Meineck reminds us that in ancient tragedy it is the mask that provides the visual means to denote a performance (it is the mask that makes it enactment and thus theatre, and not real life) and, most importantly perhaps, adds that it is also the mask that produces the intimacy necessary to provoke individual, emotional responses in the spectator. I am interested in how we might apply Meineck's argument to masked dance performance in the museum. Meineck's conception of the tragic mask as having a dual function as denoting performance and encouraging intimacy in terms of the visual relationship between spectator and performer is something that performance in the museum might be able to exploit. By placing dance in the vitrine-like glass spaces of the Ashmolean, how might my masked gaze engage with the gaze of the onlooker? How might the mask look back, and literally subvert the objectifying gaze back to the viewer, as the terracotta mask in the museum had first looked back at me?⁹⁴

⁹⁴ I am aware that in looking to 'return the gaze' my practice here in some way echoes that of a highly controversial production staged at the 2014 Edinburgh International Festival, *Exhibit B*. *Exhibit B* situated itself somewhere between performance and exhibition with thirteen *tableaux vivants* featuring black performers and aimed to look at themes of racism, 'othering' and the colonial history of Europe in Africa. The site-specific exhibit, which was created by South African artist Brett Bailey, drew on the 'human zoos' and ethnographic displays so popular during the colonial period, and place Africans and African asylum-seekers in display cases, reminiscent of hidden curiosity cabinets, that turned the gaze back on Europeans.



Fig. 14: *Philomela*, part of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*, Ashmolean Museum, 2018.
Photograph: Brandon Kahn



Fig. 15: *Philomela*, Ashmolean Museum, 2018. Photograph: Marchella Ward

Masking and Unmasking the Dance: *Philomela*

My palm slides across the glass, my fingers tracing its cold surface. My shoulder pushes up against the glass, then my cheek, then my forehead, my eyes looking directly ahead to meet theirs. Turning slowly, I choose to turn away, my scapulae and spine pinned against the glass, the whole surface area of my back making contact with it. Turning again, I look back at them, then to my left and to my right at the fragmented friezes surrounding me. My body, moulded against the glass, is pulled into a deliberate movement, a movement reminiscent of the painted lines on the vases below, an arm reaching upwards, extending to arms extending from the sculpted friezes. I pause for an instant, a split second of stillness that is not quite stillness, but moving, moving in the quiet motion of breath. Slowly, deliberately, I continue to move never entirely stopping. It is as though I am resisting petrification. This is not so much about reanimation as resisting the sculptural stillness surrounding me. Slowly, deliberately, I make my way along the glass, my body warm behind the glass vitrine encasing me, turning and revolving, occasionally stopping and yet not stopping, the movement of my breath continuous and fluid. Once I reach the far end of the glass, I lift my arms upwards, I close my eyes, I open my mouth and I scream.

Falling to the floor in slow motion, falling through time and space, I turn my head to an object in the vitrine next to me. It is a mask, it is her mask, with its smooth, blank surface and blank eyes and open mouth looking up at me. I spend a long moment in contemplation of the mask, before picking it up and cradling it in my hands. I hold it at full arms distance and time suddenly picks up in speed, speeds up, taking me

backwards along the glass. I hold the mask up, look it directly in the eye and put it over my face.

Now I can tell Philomela's story.

This is Philomela.

- Rehearsal notes, March 2017

The first choreography to emerge during the 2017 APGRD residency was an early version of *Philomela*, which eventually became one of the four fragments of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*. Philomela is a relatively minor figure in ancient Greek mythology but is frequently invoked in literary and artistic works in the Western canon. She appears in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (4.401-674), which was the main source text for finding narratives to develop my emerging practice. While the myth of Philomela has many variations, Ovid's narrative is that, after being raped and mutilated by her sister Procne's husband, Tereus, who cuts out her tongue so she cannot speak of her ordeal, Philomela obtains her revenge and is then transformed into a nightingale (coincidentally, in nature, the female nightingale is mute and only the male of the species sings). For the performance in the glass walkways of the Ashmolean, I chose to use Ovid's story of Philomela as a metaphor for the story of the muteness of those 'unknown' women housed in the archaeological museum. On first seeing those bodies *in situ* in the museum, I had been struck by the silencing of those unknown female voices through history and the appropriation of their bodies and their stories in such an arguably patrilineal space. How could I 'reclaim' a space, and a body, for them? In thinking of those women, and of Philomela too, whose story is even appropriated by Ovid, I wanted the practice to ask how you might speak when

you have no tongue. How do you tell your story when you have no voice? How do you move and communicate when you are bound, trapped and voiceless?

The short eleven-minute solo *Philomela* was performed in two of the Ashmolean's vitrine-like glass atria.⁹⁵ Behind the glass, half-exhibit, half-movement installation, with no soundscape or music,⁹⁶ the solo offered a space for subverting the idea of being looked at; for looking out, for looking back, and through performing the act of masking and unmasking, for returning the gaze. The first few minutes of the solo played with the idea of the *tableau vivant*, of stillness that was never really stillness but a continuous slow motion movement along and behind the glass vitrine (see video, 25:36-30:26). This recalled allusions to the Galatea / Pygmalion trope from modernist dance and cinema (see above, p. 140), and offered a way into introducing the mask as a means of bridging the gap between the statuary and the mobile. After a moment of looking at the mask, once I had put it on, the narrative of *Philomela* proper could begin. This was a furious and fast-paced choreography exploring movements of restriction and struggle, of an imprisoned body, a caged nightingale whose wings are clipped and whose music is silent (see video from 32:31 onwards). During the very first performance of *Philomela* at the Ashmolean in March 2017, I was struck by the encounter with the public. Having rehearsed in my 'glass box' in relative solitude on the days when the museum was closed to the public, here I was suddenly exposed and on display. It was the strangest experience of (albeit intended) objectification: as I danced behind my glass, I was watched from all sides,

⁹⁵ Please see accompanying video (*Philomela* - 25:33-37:18).

⁹⁶ It was at this moment that the choice to dance in the museum in (relative) silence – rather than to music – was made. This decision was maintained throughout the whole of the creative process for *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*. The work was performed in silence, with only the ambient sounds of the museum underscoring the work. As I danced behind glass, enclosed in vitrine-like spaces, visitors could not even hear the sound of my breath.

from above and from below by hundreds of pairs of eyes. Yet, through the mask, I found that I was somehow able to return their gaze, and to make a connection with those eyes looking at me from the other side of the glass. It was as if I was pleading them to look at me, to acknowledge me, and thereby to acknowledge Philomela. This return of the gaze was Philomela's final, silent cry. I began to realize that this practice was not so much about a sculpture being brought to life by a Pygmalion, but a sculpture resisting the petrification of the gaze. The question of exactly how my dance practice in the museum subverts notions of the 'classical' gaze is something that I will turn to in the next chapter.

Afterwards, I am exhausted. Philomela has pulled me into action, pulled me into the dance. This is a story of struggle, of rape, of appropriation, of mutilation, of having one's voice taken away so that even screams are silent and only silence resounds in this space. Even transformation cannot transform silence. Behind the glass, the bird flutters in her cage before coming to a final stillness but not-yet stillness. Slowly, letting my heart rate slow and my breath calm, I take off the mask and I look at it; slowly, I hold it at arm's length, I open my mouth wide into one final silent scream, and then I edge along the glass, disappearing once again.

- Rehearsal notes, March 2017



Fig. 16: *Philomela* in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, March 2017.
Photograph: Jon Lewis / *The Oxford Times*.

7. Sisters Resisting the Gaze: Releasing Classical Heroines Back into the Museum

Introduction

This aim of this chapter is two-fold: firstly, to investigate theories of the gaze in classical scholarship, in relation to Greek and Latin literature and most especially Roman poet Ovid's hexameter poem *Metamorphoses* which I use as a source text in my practice-as-research re-imagining the principles of ancient Roman dance-theatre form *tragoedia saltata*; and, secondly, to explore how I engage these theories in relation to the development of my choreographic practice in the archaeological museum. There is a vast body of critical and classical scholarship on theories of the gaze, including Kaplan (1983), Richlin (1992), Segal (1994), Kampen (1996), Fredrick (2002), Sharrock (2002) and Lovatt (2013), and I am most indebted to the thorough and wide-ranging work that has already been accomplished in the field of classics. In particular, classical scholar Patricia Salzmann-Mitchell's 2005 study on the gaze at work in Ovid, *A Web of Fantasies: Gaze, Image, and Gender in Ovid's Metamorphoses*, has proved most helpful to my own project. Situating itself in the line of classicist David Fredrick's enquiry in his 2002 study entirely dedicated to the Roman gaze, Salzmann-Mitchell's work explores the relationships between gaze and visual imagery in Ovid's hexameter poem. It applies feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey's seminal article 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975) to the classical context and approaches Ovid's poem as an inter-play of intrusive and fixing gazes. Salzmann-Mitchell develops Mulvey's argument with her emphasis on women telling stories for each other, and argues for a reading of Ovid that she terms as both resisting and releasing, one that somehow lets the female characters speak for

themselves despite the male authorial voice. What I would like to propose in this chapter is how my choreographic practice-as-research in the archaeological museum engages with and responds to Salzman-Mitchell's resisting and releasing readings of Ovid. Salzman-Mitchell offers several female characters as principal case studies for those of Ovid's classical heroines 'resisting' the gaze and, coincidentally (or perhaps not quite so coincidentally), two of these central studies are the eponymous women who feature in my own choreographic practice in the solos *Myrrha* and *Philomela*. Whereas Salzman-Mitchell, by discussing the text from the perspective of three types of gazes - i) of characters looking, ii) of the poet who narrates visual images, and iii) of the reader who 'sees' these images woven in the text, maintains that the female perspective can be 'released' through the traditional female occupation of weaving (a feature of the Philomela story, whose muting and mutilation means she has to weave a tapestry depicting her rape), and argues for Philomela as a visual artist *par excellence*, I am interested in how this releasing reading of this 'visual' depiction of these women's stories can be brought back into the body through choreography.⁹⁷ How are those resisting female heroines then released differently into the museum through the dance? Salzman-Mitchell's resisting and releasing readings of Ovid tie in neatly with the visual aspect of the dancer exhibited and viewed in the archaeological museum, and, by extension, with how 'history' might be re-written and re-viewed on the dancer's body as it moves throughout the museum.

At this juncture, it is important to outline some of the most salient points of readings of 'gaze' theories for my own project. The sheer volume of work that has been accomplished to date in this field in classics means that I cannot hope to give a

⁹⁷ I am also considering 'choreo-graphy' here not only as way of writing through the body, but also of reading that writing.

full account of the debate here, and I am well aware that I am at best somewhat skimming through the body of scholarship and selecting what I feel best aligns with my own arguments. However, while I am writing as a practising researcher, choreographer and performer, and my work is foregrounded in dance studies, my background in classics means that I aim in this particular chapter – as well as in the wider thesis - to fully integrate these two very different perspectives. In chapter three (p. 68), I proposed feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey’s 1975 article, ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’ as a seminal text for my own understanding of the term ‘the gaze’ in how I believe it relates to my practice in the museum, with the choreographic practice as having the potential to smash the glass vitrine enclosing the exhibited female body in the archaeological museum and recuperating a live body for a ‘dead’ narrative (or at least offering an *alternative* narrative through the live dancer), thereby enabling the exhibited female to somehow return the gaze of the male collector. I have also suggested in the previous chapter that it might be the use of the mask in my practice that enables this return of the gaze. Yet, as we shall see below, my reading of Salzman-Mitchell and other feminist classical scholars leads me to suppose that there might be more at play here than simply the return of the male gaze. Might there also be ways to not merely return the gaze but to act upon it? Might the female gaze become – through choreographed performance - as active and ‘performative’ as the male?⁹⁸

⁹⁸ It is worth noting that there is an interesting play of different power relations at work here - between the fleshy, physically present female (the dancer) and the physically absent male authority (the collector, or curator; in the Ashmolean, for example, the ghost of Elias Ashmole and the male ‘Keepers of Antiquity’ who have come after him throughout the museum’s history). For even if the male collector absents himself once his job has been done, does he still haunt the museum in a way that means the female’s ‘returning’ gaze can ‘re-collect’ the male authority in the museum?

In order to unpick all of this, let us first return briefly to Mulvey, where these theories begin. The term ‘the gaze’ has been at the centre of feminist approaches to text and art since the appearance of Mulvey’s 1975 article, where she argues that the gaze of classic narrative cinema is masculine and active and the feminine is a passive object to be looked at. Most significantly, Mulvey expanded the psychoanalytical concept of the objectifying power of the gaze to viewing woman as object and man as beholder. As Salzman-Mitchell reads Mulvey, the emphasis falls on woman as spectacle, consistently manipulated and directed by the male gaze:

Woman as visual object will have various positions in film and narrative. She is an eroticized image for the characters within the screen or story, but she is also an erotic and visual object for the spectators (and readers in this case) within the audience. *Woman thus becomes spectacle*, a spectacle controlled by the power of the male gaze. (Salzman-Mitchell 2005: 6, my emphasis)

Forty years after its publication, Mulvey’s work has been much utilised, critiqued and developed by feminist classical scholars. It is important to note that what Mulvey omitted to explore was what happens when the spectator is a woman and what the outcome is when the creator or character is a woman, and while aware of this last question, Mulvey does not give us an answer to it. E. Ann Kaplan (1983) has asked some crucial critical questions following on from this. Kaplan proposes that objectification in and of itself may not be the problem, as the capacity to reify may be a component of both men and women who look. Rather, the problem is that

men do not simply look; their gaze carries with it the power of action and possession that is lacking in the female gaze. Women receive and return the gaze but cannot act on it. (Kaplan 1983: 311)

Kaplan’s statement, which agrees fairly well with Mulvey, is rather reductive as it precludes any possibility of women acting upon their gazes. This is where Salzman-Mitchell’s work comes in. Salzman-Mitchell argues that while it is true that women cannot respond violently to the penetrative male gaze, in Ovid’s poem at least, they

can still find alternative ways to act upon what they see, especially by narrating and by becoming witnesses. Although Salzman-Mitchell is aware that Kaplan questions whether the gaze is necessarily masculine, or whether it might be possible to structure things so that women may own a gaze, and also whether women would indeed want to own a gaze, and what that would then mean for a woman spectator, she concludes that Kaplan does not answer these questions successfully. Salzman-Mitchell then goes on to look at Mulvey's 1989 article which expands the 1975 version and responds to some of the criticism of her earlier arguments by offering two possibilities for the female spectator: either to identify with the passive woman in the narrative and thereby locate herself as erotic fantasy, or to identify with the male gaze. Salzman-Mitchell is quick to observe that there is indeed another possibility that Mulvey omits: that of a woman spectator observing a woman who is a recipient of male sexual activity. She might even be a woman watching a man looking at a woman; an observer of the whole process that is taking place between the male gaze and the female visual object without 'focalizing'⁹⁹ with any of the participants in particular. Most significantly, for Salzman-Mitchell, and in turn for me, 'this capacity of the gaze of women to serve as 'witness' is an important element in the search for a female gaze' (Salzman-Mitchell 2005: 9).¹⁰⁰ This is discussed in depth by Salzman-Mitchell for the case of Philomela, whose narrative forms the basis to one of my solo performance pieces for the archaeological museum, and which will be further explored below.

⁹⁹ Following Fowler (1990: 40-42), Salzman-Mitchell uses the term 'focalization' for what was traditionally termed point-of-view to refer to a particular perspective by either author or characters.

¹⁰⁰ 'Witnessing' is very different from 'gazing' and, while the distinction between the two (especially in relation to dance and performance studies) is not addressed here, I attempt to further unpick both terms in relation to my own practice in the subsequent chapter.

As Salzman-Mitchell rightly points out, approaching Ovid's *Metamorphoses* from this complex framework of theories of the gaze is a challenging task. In accordance with its protean and ever-changing nature, the poem cannot possibly be framed in only one way of understanding the gaze. While, in principle, the male gaze seems to be an overarching concept that fits alongside the patriarchal ideology of Rome, there is room for alternatives. On the one hand, in the episode of Pygmalion in Ovid's *Met.* 10.243-297, the woman appears explicitly as visual object, as the ivory statue created by male creator. However, many women do the looking too, such as Ovid's Medea (*Met.* 7.1-424) who indeed appears to appropriate the male gaze. Yet her gaze is not entirely male, as it lacks the male viewer's power to control, and so she is an example of a woman with 'penetrative and performative eyes' (Salzman-Mitchell 2005: 13) who seems to be punished and/or destroyed in Ovid's epic poem. However, with the Philomela episode in particular (*Met.* 6: 438-674), the capacity of the gaze of women to witness¹⁰¹ offers an important 'resisting' alternative and it is this alternative that appeals to my own choreographic project in the archaeological museum.

Another important point from Salzman-Mitchell is that although there is a powerful male pen behind the poem (Ovid's), in her study of it, she wishes to let the female voices and images speak for themselves. Although we must bear in mind that the visual images are constructed by a male viewer-author and that they were originally intended for a male viewer-reader (and this fits neatly with Mulvey's model), if this were the only perspective, it would not account for the wealth of

¹⁰¹ Again, it is useful here to consider the extensive discussion that has occurred in performance studies in relation to bearing witness (see Etchells and Phelan 1999). In the next chapter, I turn to how this field addresses the gendered gaze in relation to witnessing and how my own practice then speaks back to the work on 'witnessing' already accomplished in the fields of dance and performance studies (see especially pp. 180-1 of this thesis).

readings the poem today offers for a modern (female) reader. Hence, Salzman-Mitchell's study intentionally attempts to de-historicize the poem and read it as a work open to a contemporary audience, which includes women readers. Likewise, while she is careful to discuss the possible male 'authorial intentions' - or rather the reader's perceptions of what the 'authorial intentions' are - and the gaze behind the construction of a certain episode, she also allows agency to female characters, because *Metamorphoses* lets women act and become central actors in the stories, even when their movements are restricted (Salzman-Mitchell 2005: 20). She offers a resisting, releasing and recuperative reading of Ovid. It is in this resisting, releasing and recuperative reading that I align my own physical reading and re-telling of Ovid in the solos for the archaeological museum. In the previous chapter, I argued for how the mask allows me to return the gaze; but what of the other possibilities for the female gaze that the choreographic process of physically 'translating' the poem's narratives onto the live female dancer in the museum might offer? How can the dancer not only return the gaze but also physically act upon it?

Resisting and Releasing: How to Reverse Intrusive and Fixing Gazes in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

That the masculine gaze is active and penetrative is well established in feminist criticism. I have already noted that this performative power is emphasised in Kaplan's argument that the male gaze carries the power of action and possession while women can return the gaze but cannot act upon it. One must admit that Kaplan's observation is particularly relevant to Roman conceptions of seeing and sexuality cf. Roman scholar and author Varro's false derivation of the Latin verb *video* [to see] from the Latin noun *vis* [force, violence] (Varro, *De Lingua Latina*,

6.80). In the Roman imagination, there is an association of *vis* to sexual violence and thus Varro connects the ability to see with the male power to violate the female body. The connection between vision and sexual power points to the performative power of the male gaze and this can certainly be seen to reflect Roman ideology about the gaze. Rape is a pervasive theme in Ovid's poem – and indeed the episode of Philomela is marked by violent rape and graphic mutilation. Here, the male gaze is active and acting, penetrating and controlling. Amy Richlin's 1992 study, 'Reading Ovid's Rapes,' is essential and still provocative reading here:

In the *Metamorphoses*, rape keeps company with twisted loves, macabre and bloody deaths, cruel gods, cataclysms of nature, wars and, of course, grotesque transformations. (Richlin 1992: 162)

Richlin focuses on the spectacle of violence in rape and shows how characters like Philomela are turned into a visual object. Further, she wonders what we should do with a canon in which such violence against women – and pleasure in it – plays apparently so vital a role. As Helen Lovatt (2013) points out, it is interesting to see the contrast with Hardie (2002: 66-72) in which rape (and its repetition) in Ovid is read as process of desire (the Lacanian lack: desire, inevitably for something not there, is always displaced, deferred and therefore repeated), rather than an expression of power. Lovatt poses a series of valid and valuable questions:

Is rape part of the erotics of the *Metamorphoses* or part of the violence of the poem? Can the two aspects be separated? Does the erotic charge stem from the violence on display? (Lovatt 2013: 189, n.90)

Unquestionably for Richlin (1992: 165) though, the place of rape in Ovid's texts situates itself at the intersection of pleasure and violence.

One of the most direct applications of gaze theory to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* can be seen in Charles Segal's 1994 article on Philomela, which raises some of the

same issues as Richlin. Segal observes that in the case of Tereus (who rapes and mutilates Philomela, cutting out her tongue so that she cannot speak of the violence inflicted upon her) the 'tyrannical assertion of male dominance over the female body' is enacted 'symbolically through the aggressive penetration of the male gaze,' which combines fetishistic scopophilia and sadism (Segal 1994: 260). The episode of Philomela's rape and mutilation is a key one for me, as Ovid's narrative forms the basis to the solo *Philomela*.

So far, I have looked at what Salzman-Mitchell terms the intrusive gaze in Ovid, but what of that which she describes as the fixing one? The notion of the fixing gaze is a particularly interesting one for a study of dance in the archaeological museum with its galleries of ancient statues, particularly given the main example Salzman-Mitchell uses, namely Pygmalion and his ivory statue, an episode that is particularly rich in interplays between gaze and desire, between the live body and the statuary, and between mobility and immobility. The contemplation of the ivory maiden is a *mise-en-abyme* for the idea of the male gaze fixed upon the statue the man has created. Salzman-Mitchell observes that very often in the *Metamorphoses* when a woman is described, as here, the flow of narration is suddenly frozen and everything stops in the contemplation of an immobile figure, paralyzed by the gaze of the viewer/narrator. Pygmalion looks at his statue and Ovid's narration stops to effectively 'freeze-frame' her image. With this visual detention, a stoppage in the narrative is produced and the eyes of the external viewer / reader also experience the power to control the mobility of the female image. The female, the erotic object is thus constructed as an immobile statue for the viewer to enjoy. At the opening to the solo *Philomela*, before the 'masking up' and the narrative of Philomela begins, there

is a subtle subversion of the live / statuary trope in the choreography itself with a play of stillness in the dancer's live body behind the glass vitrine, herself surrounded in the space of the Ashmolean by ancient Greek and Roman sculptures (see video, 25:36 onwards). In Ovid's text, as in the choreography, the play is double as the statue eventually becomes fleshy, real; what if she can look back? And what if she can move?¹⁰²

Immobility and mobility: the ivory maiden, Myrrha and Philomela

This play of immobility and mobility is an interesting one; in Ovid, women are not only 'fixed' but are often on the move, such as in the story of the exiled Myrrha wandering in the desert having committed incest with her father and which forms the basis to my solo *Myrrha*. Myrrha's physical displacement symbolizes her deviation from standard moral and societal norms. There are interesting and significant parallels between the Myrrha and the Pygmalion / ivory maiden episodes and, in Ovid's text, Myrrha's story directly follows Pygmalion's (and, to add a further layer, both are narrated by the musician Orpheus, so we have, for example, Myrrha spoken for by Orpheus who is Ovid's own mouthpiece). In both episodes, the creator first falls in love with his creation and then it is the creation that desires the creator. For Pygmalion, it is the created statue he so desires that is animated into life; for Myrrha, the daughter who desires her father and the father who desires her back. At the beginning of her story as presented in Ovid, Myrrha is the object of desire of

¹⁰² These questions were also explored through practice in 'Galatea', the third fragment to be developed as part of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*, and which will be further discussed in the following chapter (p.175ff).

many suitors (*Met.* 10.316-7), in what is a traditional standing for ancient women.

However, she becomes the subject of desire and, with it, the subject of the gaze:

*ire libet procul hinc patriaeque relinquere fines,
dum scelus effugiam; retinet malus ardor euntem,
ut praesens spectem Cinyran tangamque loquarque
osculaque admoveam, si nil conceditur ultra.*

It is well to go far away from here and to abandon the boundaries of my fatherland, as long as I can avoid crime. An evil passion holds me back even as I try to go, so that present, I may see Cinyras and touch him, talk to him and kiss him, if nothing else is allowed. (Ovid, *Met.* 10.341-44, Salzman-Mitchell's translation, 2005: 115)

As Salzman-Mitchell observes, the phrase *oscula admoveam* recalls the character of Pygmalion when he kisses his ivory statue. Regarding the gaze, it is interesting to note that when Cinyras asks Myrrha what type of husband she would like, her answer is '*similem tibi*' / 'like you' (*Met.* 10.364). This constitutes a playful intratextual gesture towards the story of her great-grandfather Pygmalion. In his case, '*sit coniunx...similis mea...eburnae*' / 'May my wife be similar to the ivory maiden' (*Met.* 10.275-6) is directly related to physical appearance and the visual. This too is felt in the Myrrha episode, but Ovid offers us a witty inversion. While Pygmalion was in love with his creation, in Myrrha's tale it is the creation (the daughter) who loves the creator (the father).

Having been exiled and now pregnant, Myrrha wanders alone in the desert, finally becoming 'fixed' through her transformation into a tree to give birth to Adonis. What is of interest here is the fact that as someone who has committed a sexual crime she must leave her homeland, and be displaced: her crime – for which she is of course not solely responsible – makes her an errant, homeless woman, forced to wander and, rejected by her society, utterly alone. As Salzman-Mitchell puts it, 'the only way out of this impossible situation seems to be transformation' (Salzman-

Mitchell 2005: 116): for Myrrha, this is her transformation into the myrrh-tree. A woman who has been ‘gazed at’ but who allows herself to gaze in an erotic way first becomes deviant and mobile and is forced out of the ‘fatherland’ to live out her life in a liminal space for which the only possible outcome is neither life nor death, but transformation. One might argue that bodily transformation offers a resistance against immobility, the final outcome being the continuous movement of metamorphosis. However, for Myrrha, her transformation into a tree is a pinning down, a final rooting and eventually, after the labour and birth of her son Adonis through the bark, a final stillness. Certainly, in the solo *Myrrha*, the final ‘sinking down’ movement, a sensation of weight settling and coming to final stillness, follows this reading (see video, 24:48). In the choreography, at least, there is an important interplay between Myrrha’s movement (read: deviance, resistance) and stillness (read: pinning down or ‘fixing’).¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Of a related but different discourse, I point the reader to the next chapter of this thesis (p. 192ff) where I look to André Lepecki’s reading of anthropologist Nadia Seremataki’s concept of ‘still-acts’ (Lepecki, 2006: 15) to see how the shifting between stillness and motion in my own practice speaks back to Lepecki’s reading of the ‘still-act’ as the moment of the refusal of ‘the sedimentation of history into neat layers’ (ibid). For Lepecki, the ‘still act’ is in relation to the political ontology of movement in recent times, which is also the context from which spectators see my body in the Ashmolean.



Fig. 17: *Philomela*, Ashmolean Museum, 2018. Photograph: Brandon Kahn.

How to Speak When You Have No Voice?

This play between mobility and immobility, between the danced and the statuary, recalling Ovid's Pygmalion/ivory maiden episode in the context of the museum is, as I have mentioned above (p. 163), also at work in the solo *Philomela*, which uses Ovid's version as a source text. Ovid's Philomela story is well known and has been widely discussed, especially in feminist critique (Joplin, 1984; Marder, 1992; de Luce, 1993; Segal, 1994 and Liveley, 1999b). Emphasis has normally been laid on the question of power, silence and voice, and Joplin (1984) in particular raises the feminist agenda of these questions and sees in Ovid a 'silencing' of women in the tale of Philomela that feminists must expose. Salzman-Mitchell is quick to point out that this (rightful) focus on the voice has somewhat overshadowed the importance of the visual in Ovid's telling of the story where 'the motor of the tragedy is a desire *to see*' (Salzman-Mitchell 2005: 139, original emphasis). This reassertion of the visual

in Salzman-Mitchell's reading of the Philomela episode is of especial import to my own project.

As discussed in the previous chapter, for the performance in the glass walkways of the Ashmolean, I chose to use Ovid's story of Philomela as a metaphor for the story of the muteness of those 'unknown' women housed in the archaeological museum. Behind the glass, half-exhibit, half-movement installation, with no soundscape or music, the solo offered a space for subverting the idea of the visual, of being looked at; for looking out, for looking back, and through performing the act of masking and unmasking, for returning the gaze. My re-imagining of Philomela's story through the body and through dance is certainly more dependent on the *visual* than the aural, and fits well with Salzman-Mitchell's reading of the episode in Ovid. Salzman-Mitchell offers a rich textual analysis of the visual in Ovid's telling of the Philomela story. She reminds us that when Philomela's sister Procne begs her husband Tereus to bring her sister to her [*Met.* 6.440-1] the passive *visendae* (from the verb 'video' / to see) is used. It is common in Latin to use 'seeing' for 'being with' in a metonymic way, yet when we 'are' with somebody we normally 'see' her too, but we might say that Philomela is, from the beginning, an object of the desire to see; thus the passive nuance of *visendae* becomes more meaningful. Philomela is offered in the text as an image to be looked at. Furthermore, this desire to see becomes, as is typical in Ovid, displaced and distorted. When her Tereus arrives in Athens, he is possessed by Philomela's *forma* and soon becomes the erotic viewer. Ovid plays with this issue of seeing in the very name of the protagonist: Tereus is etymologically linked with the idea of watching (from the ancient Greek *τηρεω* – to watch over, guard). The early image of seeing in a more general sense is soon

transformed into a more violent desire and the narration once more ‘freezes’ to describe Philomela, thus fixing her:

*ecce venit magno dives Philomela paratu
divitior forma; quales audire solemus
naidas et dryads mediis incedere silvis,
si modo des illis cultus similesque paratus.
non secus exarsit conpecta virgine Tereus.*

Look! Here comes Philomela, rich in great apparel, but richer in beauty such as we often hear that the naiads and dryads walk about in the middle of the woods, if only one gave them similar apparel and refinement. As soon as he sees the maiden, Tereus burns with love (*Met.* 6. 451-55, Salzman-Mitchell’s translation, 2005: 140)

As Segal (1994: 260) observes, Tereus’ desire is expressed in his eyes and the gaze here equals a desire for possession:

*perque suam contraque suam petit ipsa salutem.
spectat eam Tereus praecontractatque videndo
osculaue et collo circumdata bracchia cernens
omnia pro stimulis facibusque ciboque furoris
accipit.*

She [Philomela] herself begs that she may see her sister, for (and against) her own welfare. Tereus looks at her and by looking he imagines his future pleasure; and the vision of her kisses and her arms around her father’s neck are all like goads, fire and food for his passion. (*Met.* 6. 476-82, Salzman-Mitchell’s translation, 2005: 141)

For Salzman-Mitchell, Philomela is ‘a spectacle, an object to be looked at, and the reader does not hear her voice until after the rape’ (Salzman-Mitchell 2005: 142). It is true that she cries out for help at the moment of her rape, but in the text this is described through indirect speech, which creates some distance. However, after the rape, she begins to curse and complain as if sexuality had opened her voice. It is short-lived, for Tereus quickly silences her by cutting out her tongue. Salzman-Mitchell here draws a useful parallel between Philomela and Pygmalion’s statue: Tereus must silence her, for her voice has disrupted the visual illusion she has previously presented:

Philomela is an object of visual desire, a spectacle, a delight of the gaze of the one who wishes to possess her; a sort of ivory maiden who, with her voice, has come to life and destroyed the work of art (ibid).

Women must be seen and not heard. However, the story is far from over. For, through and indeed because of her enforced silencing, Philomela too becomes subversive.

Once raped and ‘silenced’ by Tereus after he cuts out her tongue, she finds resource in weaving to communicate her story to her sister Procne. By this means she arrogates a gaze for herself, which substitutes for the words she cannot pronounce. If one looks closely at the Latin text, one sees that she weaves ‘purple marks on a white background’ (*purpureasque notas filis intextuit albis*, *Met.* 6.577). These marks are a clear symbol of violent sexual intercourse: Philomela sees herself as a white virgin surface (or page) that has been stained by rape. The combination of red over white is a common trope for the blush of virgins, and is also seen in Pygmalion’s ivory statue (*Met.* 10: 293). Here Philomela’s ‘recreation’ of her own story as communicated to her sister implies an act of reading / visualising her own rape from a personal point of view. In her weaving, the depiction of her story reproduces graphically the scene of the rape. She reproduces her own rape as red signs¹⁰⁴ over a white cloth and by narrating it, symbolically re-enacts it (Marder 1992: 161; Joplin 1984: 52: ‘her [Philomela’s] body was the original page on which a tale was written in blood’). Philomela is not only the object of the gaze, but possesses a gaze herself, for her weaving of her story in her tapestry shows her own version – or viewing – of events. In Salzman-Mitchell’s reading of Ovid’s Philomela, the story gives a gaze back

¹⁰⁴ Marder recalls that ‘the text does not specify whether the weaving describes the rape through pictures or words... The Latin word *notas* translated as ‘signs’ can mean marks of writing on a page, punctuations, perforation, as well as marks on a body, such as brand or tattoo and, by extension, a distinguishing mark of shame and disgrace’ (Marder 1992: 60).



Fig. 18: *Philomela*, Ashmolean Museum, 2018. Photograph: Marchella Ward.

to women, especially to Philomela who not only goes from a static object of a man's gaze at the beginning to an agent of revenge who murders Tereus' son (which could be read as the ultimate act of castration) at the end, but who can also create images on a tapestry and give her own version of events – against the false narration given to Procne by Tereus.¹⁰⁵

And yet, above all, as Salzman-Mitchell concludes, 'Ovid silences Philomela's version by replacing it with his own, but Procne can still read that [Philomela's] silence in silence' (Salzman-Mitchell 2005: 144). Just as Tereus cuts out Philomela's tongue and thereby takes away her power of speech, it could be

¹⁰⁵ Philomela's story has most commonly interested critics for its implications for female writing, voice and power. Although she admits that this aspect is important, Salzman-Mitchell's reading has a different focus on women as plastic / visual artists (weaver) and communicators through visual images (tapestry). This position is not entirely new: in Sophocles' lost tragedy *Tereus*, Philomela wove images and not text. As Marder's (1992) analysis reveals, the Latin word 'notas' (the marks on the tapestry) can mean pictures or signs as well as letters.

argued that Ovid too suppresses her capacity of visual representation, as he only assigns two lines to a description of her weaving. The reader cannot ‘see’ the picture directly; rather Philomela’s ‘marks’ provoke the female reader to recover in her own imagination exactly what is on the tapestry. Salzman-Mitchell here defines the quality of the female gaze as having the capacity to incite ‘suspicion’ and to stimulate the viewer / reader to complete visions from what she terms ‘a few *indicia*’ [hints]:

Women as viewers and creators construct visual imagery with a female audience in mind, an audience that, they know, will be able to ‘suspect’ and find out what is behind the appearances. (Salzman-Mitchell 2005: 148)

For Salzman-Mitchell, one final point about the female gaze in the story has to do with its capacity to witness. We have seen that feminist critics, like Kaplan, argue that women can return the gaze but not act on it. However, thinking of the gaze of women as a witnessing one, and one that records personal experiences, may offer an alternative to Kaplan’s thesis:

Philomela’s tapestry gives testimony of what she has undergone and by bearing witness it provokes action in her reader. So, while the story does not have a very edifying ending for women, it still provides – if only momentarily – a female gaze. It allows Philomela to inscribe her story in the book of the *Metamorphoses* and to incite a response in her sister to ‘suspect’ and interpret what cannot be seen. Philomela witnessing her story will be an important model that the gaze of other women in the poem will follow. (ibid: 148-9)

Through her own artistic endeavour, Philomela is able to leave an indelible red ‘mark’ in Ovid’s poem and to give, if not a full vision, a glimpse of what she has seen. By being a witness and communicating her story to another woman (her sister Procne), she achieves something beyond her initial status as the passive object of Tereus’ very penetrative, violent gaze. Unlike the many men in the poem who perform acts of violence in the poem and get away with it, although Procne and Philomela do not get away with their violence (the avenging murder of Tereus’ son), they can at least witness and communicate their story ‘in their own words.’



Fig. 19: *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*, Ashmolean Museum, 2018.
 Photograph: Brandon Kahn

Woman's Witnessing Gaze

The ideas of women witnessing and of offering 'glimpses' of female narratives to be completed by the imagination of female readers who are to fill in the gaps, are significant ideas at play in Salzman-Mitchell's readings of both the Myrrha and the Philomela episodes and appeal to my broader project of offering a glimpse of alternative female narratives of both these characters' stories when performed in the museum. In the museum setting, the *visual* takes precedence over the written; the body takes precedence over the written word. The relationship between dancer and viewer is a visual one, viewed either collectively (in what Dorothea von Hantelmann might term a 'ritual performance-event'), or perhaps in its durational aspect, one-on-one. Yet whereas Salzman-Mitchell appeals to Philomela as a plastic artist, representing her rape in marks on her tapestry, I am interested in translating this representational experience back onto the body through the dance. I am also drawn to Salzman-Mitchell's notion of the female glimpse to be completed by the viewer, and

would posit that in viewing the dance in the museum setting, the viewer-spectator somehow ‘completes’ the alternative glimpse of an alternative, female bodily history offered by the dancer’s performance. This idea of completing the picture, of putting the pieces back together again, takes me back to the notion of fragmentation at play in the archaeological museum setting that I have previously explored with reference to Brandstetter’s work on the fragmentary nature of performance in the museum as offering an alternative to traditional historiography. To Brandstetter’s argument, as one final thought, I would like to add classical art historian Page DuBois’ work on the gaze in relation to ‘archaic bodies-in-pieces’ (DuBois 1996: 55). Situating her work in the lineage of feminist art historians (Brown 1993; Kampen 1994;), DuBois argues for a recognition of our own relationship to the fragmented artefacts of the archaic past, whether they be a few lines of text, or some shards of broken pottery. DuBois makes an important point, which somewhat paradoxically sits alongside Salzman-Mitchell’s appeal that the viewer ‘complete’ the fragmentary glimpse of the female narrative:

Rather than focusing on the restoration of lost wholes, or even the tragic impossibility of the reconstitution, rather than looking exclusively at the real, the past to which we must always have a fleeting and receding relationship, perhaps we should look also at our own desires, our investments in these lost objects, these shattered fragments of the past. What is our connection to them? What kind of consequences would follow from *recognizing our own positions as gazers, as viewers of the fragments of the ancient world?* (DuBois 1996: 61-62, my emphasis)

Indeed, I have recently argued elsewhere that:

It is perhaps incorrect to suggest that the contemporary viewer ‘completes’ the fragmentary glimpse of the female heroine by filling in the gaps, as this assumes that reconstitution is possible, when it never can be. Perhaps it is more apposite to look at what happens when the gaps are recognised for themselves, when the viewer in the museum recognises herself as another gazer, viewing a fragmentary performance of fragmentary stories from the ancient world. And further, what of the connection between the dancer-viewer

to the fragmentary stories of the ancient women she is telling through her body? (Crawley 2017: 75)

DuBois concludes her argument by citing a fragment of the Greek female lyric poet Sappho, which reads ‘But I claim there will be some who remember us when we are gone’ (Littlemore, *Greek Lyrics* 41, cited in Dubois 1996: 62), and asks what might such remembrance be:

Do we want simply to remember the everyday life of multitudes of women now dead, whom we can never know? Do we want to restore to them a narrative of which they have been deprived? [...] Perhaps if we accept the necessity of fragmentation, the ways in which our access to the past is limited, our access to any narrative determined in part by our own desire, we can contemplate a new relationship between ourselves and the archaic past, one that focuses not only on its irretrievability but also on what pleasures it offers, what identifications or estrangements it allows, how its memory is used in contemporary debates about community, subjectivity, and the place of art. (Dubois 1996: 62)

This seems to me integral to an understanding of what happens when we ‘release’ our classical heroines such as Myrrha and Philomela by letting them dance in the museum, that principal site of memory and of remembering and of recollecting history. For DuBois, the fragmentary offers an alternative to the arguably patriarchal and patrilineal reclamation of history as needing to be a process of putting everything back together into a whole. Rather, the connection between the past and the present, between ‘then’ and ‘now’ is necessarily fragmented: it is ‘the spaces between the fragments in the dance, the cracks in between the stories, that should be held up to the light to discover both what they contain and what they let slip through’ (Crawley 2017: 75). In the next chapter, I make some suggestions as to what strategies the dance has to do this.



Fig. 20: 'Galatea', part of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*, Ashmolean Museum, 2018.
Photograph: Brandon Kahn.

8. Witnessing the 'Still Dance'

'Galatea'

Eyes closed, eyelids slowly fluttering open and closing again, gently awakening to an invisible touch, a birth; a rebirth; a fluttering of life in the chest, the sternum, the heart.

Warmth radiating from the centre point, flowing first into limbs and then into extremities;

The neck, the head, slowly moving, awakening, revealing alabaster flesh;

Arms extend upwards, fingers search, eyes open. The chest opens, the heart opens, the hips move, then the bones of the sacrum, knees, ankles, the tiny bones in the feet, slowly turning, revolving on oneself, moving towards the glass, yielding to it, warming, loosening, softening, melting.

- Rehearsal notes, June 2017

‘*Galatea*’ was the third to be developed of the four solo dances that make up the durational work *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*.¹⁰⁶ Sited in the vitrine-like balcony high above the museum’s main entrance, the solo draws on a passage from Roman author Ovid’s poem *Metamorphoses* 10.243-297, a well-known story from classical mythology, that of the sculptor Pygmalion who carves a statue so beautiful that he falls in love with it. Pygmalion prays to the goddess of love, Venus, for a bride who should be the living likeness of his sculpture. The goddess grants him an answer to this prayer and the statue comes to life. Although unnamed in Ovid’s text, Galatea is the name commonly given to the ivory maiden (hence the inverted commas of my own title); in naming the dance work ‘*Galatea*’, I was keen to offer both a body and a name to this unnamed woman whose story is appropriated even by Ovid. In keeping with the museum context and the galleries of statues below the performance space, this fragment, like *Myrrha* and *Philomela*, plays with opposing notions of the statuary and the mobile, of stillness and movement, of dancing body and sculptural mask. Through the practice of creating and performing ‘*Galatea*’, two parallel yet arguably inter-connected ideas began to arise: the first relating to the gaze, already explored in *Philomela*, and the second to stillness. This chapter first looks to how these two fundamental ideas operate through my dance practice in the museum, and then moves to bring together ideas of the fragmentary with ideas of the monumental to make a claim for dance performance in the museum as the ‘fragmentary monumental.’ The following (especially pp. 178-182 and pp. 192-194) includes some material from my recently published chapter, “‘The Crafted Body’: Thoughts on Dancing, Viewing and Remembering,’ in *A World of Muscle, Bone and Organs: Research and*

¹⁰⁶ I invite the reader to view the accompanying video (‘*Galatea*’ - 00:10-11:31).

Scholarship in Dance (Ellis, Blades, and Waelde, 2018) and I am grateful to the editors to be able to reproduce it here.

Diachronicity, synchronicity and ‘stillness-that-is-not-quite stillness’

Classical scholar Patricia Salzman-Mitchell (2005) has pointed out the extensive interplays between gaze, desire, mobility and immobility in the Pygmalion episode in Ovid’s text (see also chapter seven of this thesis, especially pp. 162-3). The episode is well-known and has received much scholarly attention in relation to the gaze (Elsner 1991, Sharrock 1991a and 1991b; Liveley, 1999a and 1999b), although these studies vary considerably as to their views on the statue’s agency, or lack of it. Within all these various stances, I have been drawn in particular to Salzman-Mitchell’s close textual reading of Ovid and the ‘performativity’ of Pygmalion as creator (Salzman-Mitchell 2005: 70). I wish to dwell for a moment on Salzman-Mitchell’s reading of a particular passage in Ovid’s text, as it underpins the choreographic practice of ‘*Galatea*’. Salzman-Mitchell’s reading of *Metamorphoses* 10.247-49 and Ovid’s use of what she terms the ‘diachronicity’ of the repeated preterit tense (showing a succession of completed actions) places the male Pygmalion as the central, active and mobile character. It is his agency that leads to the creation of the statue; he is the artist who embodies masculine action. To demonstrate this, here is the Latin text in question, with the preterit verbs in bold:

*interea niveum mira feliciter arte
sculpsit ebur formamque **dedit**, qua femina nasci
nulla potest, operisque sui **concepit** amorem.*

In the meantime, he successfully sculpted a statue of dazzling ivory with amazing art and gave it a beauty that no woman can be born with. He fell in

love with his own work. (Ovid, *Met.* 10.247-49, Salzman-Mitchell's translation, 2005: 70)¹⁰⁷

Salzman-Mitchell suggests how, after these three lines of the act of creation itself, the reader's gaze is directed towards the finished work (*Met.* 10.250-53) and a narrative pause or 'stoppage' is produced in the text, a still moment, where the reader, like Pygmalion, stops to gaze upon the statue:

*virginis est verae facies, quam vivere credas,
et, si non obstat reverentia, velle moveri:
ars adeo latet arte sua. miratur et haurit
pectore Pygmalion simulate corporis ignes.*

Her face is that of a real maiden, which you would think was alive, and, if shame did not prevent it, you would think she would want to be moved: to such an extent does his art conceal his art. Pygmalion admires her and burns in his heart with the fires inspired by the crafted body. (Ovid, *Met.* 10.250-53, Salzman-Mitchells' translation, 2005: 73)

Salzman-Mitchell emphasises how the verbs in these lines are now mostly in the present tense, which gives an idea of both detention and synchronic action: 'the image of the woman detains the action and with its visual charge produces a stoppage in the narrative (Salzman-Mitchell 2005: 74). So, while Pygmalion remains the more active, mobile character when kissing and touching the passive statue, as the statue is activated, he himself begins to lose his agency while the formerly passive created body becomes the agential one. In Salzman-Mitchell's reading, it is Pygmalion who seems to be affected by the immobility of the statue by becoming himself less active. Once the statue decides to move, it is she who becomes the agential character, looking back at her creator, returning his gaze and acting upon it. It was Salzman-Mitchell's evocation of this play between the diachronic and synchronic that led to an important aspect of the performance of 'Galatea' in the museum. The durational performance

¹⁰⁷ The Latin 'forma' (cf. 'mutatas formas' in *Met.* 1.1 for the changing forms of the bodies within the work of *Metamorphoses* and changing form of the body of the poem itself) and 'opus' are meta-critical pointers in terms of Pygmalion standing in for Ovid as creative artist and the statue's body as the 'corpus' of an artistic work.

allowed for, and indeed called for, moments of stoppage, of stillness, of stillness and movement, of something that I came to term as a ‘stillness-that-is-not-quite-stillness.’¹⁰⁸ I began to understand how dance performance in the museum might allow for an alternative to a linear, diachronic and chronological narrative; the present-ness of the performing moment enabling a fragmentary, synchronic view. As such, the practice of performing ‘*Galatea*’ seemed to offer an alternative possibility for viewing history in the museum, allowing for such a synchronic and fragmented view, rather than a linear ‘received’ version of events.

In the Pygmalion / Galatea episode, in both Ovid’s text and in my performance of ‘*Galatea*,’ the desiring gaze of Pygmalion stands in for the gaze of the reader and viewer in the museum respectively. On display in her glass vitrine, the viewing public, namely those visitors standing below me in the museum’s atrium, gaze upon my Galatea. However, it is worth remembering here that Pygmalion is also, importantly, a creator; he is an artist, standing in for Ovid. This raises some important questions:

What of the authorial gaze then, the gaze of the creative artist? What of the gaze of the choreographer? Does ‘*Galatea*’ really wish to be a ‘crafted body’ once again, only this time through choreography? Does she wish to be re-animated once more through the dance? How was I to ensure that my creative act in reawakening ‘*Galatea*’ did not become yet another act of re-appropriation? (Crawley 2018a: 66)

Witnessing History: A Durational Practice

I still had to reconcile this with how my own re-awakening and re-fleshing of these heroines’ stories, and their bodies, did not become yet another in a very long

¹⁰⁸ I am reminded here of Steve Paxton’s ‘small dance’ (Paxton cited in Zimmer 1977: 11) and of Lepecki’s reading of Paxton in his argument for stillness as ‘the vibratile microscopy of dance’ (Lepecki 2000: 334).

line of appropriations. In resolving this issue, it is Salzman-Mitchell's concept of 'witnessing' as explored in the previous chapter that began to speak to me most clearly. Salzman-Mitchell's notion of Ovid's women as witnesses who offer 'glimpses' of female narratives to be completed by the imaginations of female readers who are asked to 'fill in the gaps,' appeals to my broader project of offering a glimpse of alternative female narratives of these heroines' stories when performed in the museum. Salzman-Mitchell's idea of a female glimpse that is to be completed by the viewer also speaks to the 'archaeological' idea of a series of visual fragments that the viewer is called upon to reassemble. The durational practice in the museum sought to do exactly that: these danced fragments could be viewed from multiple angles, seen just once or several times. As such, each viewer only ever caught partial glimpses of the dance, fragments of a story that could be reassembled by the viewer multiple times and in myriad different ways.

I was also struck by how I might be able to apply Salzman-Mitchell's notion of witnessing to the practice itself: how might 'witnessing' speak back to the gaze, to how we look and how we are looked at? Moreover, how might Salzman-Mitchell's concept of witnessing as applied to the choreographic practice also speak back to witnessing as understood in dance and performance studies? Tim Etchells and Peggy Phelan have offered rich discussions of witnessing versus viewing performance (Etchells and Phelan, 1999). Etchells and Phelan suggest that witnessing suggests a

complicity¹⁰⁹ between viewer and performer, for:

To witness an event is to be present at it in some fundamentally ethical way, to feel the weight of things and one's place in them, even if that place is simply, for the moment, as an onlooker. (Etchells and Phelan 1999: 17)

This concept of being fundamentally ethically present and feeling 'the weight of things' may also be related to that which dance scholar Elizabeth Dempster describes in somatic dance practice as the 'witness dyad', a movement practice that explores watching and being watched, a tool that 'has been explored by dancers as a way of countering the feeling of objectification [...] the feeling of becoming an object of another's gaze' (Dempster 2004:109). Here the action of witnessing is no longer about objectification, but operates as a mutual exchange between viewer and dancer. It is important to point out for that for Dempster, witnessing is a shared experience where there is an understood 'contract' in that process, which is a very different context from that of me, the dancer, in relation to the museum visitor who happens to chance upon a performance. However, it does lead me to think about how

[...] in my practice as choreographer and dancer, I become witness: witness to Ovid's heroines, witness to those women of the past. If I am their witness, then I am complicit in their story; I must bear witness for their past in the dock of the present. I am no longer gazing at 'Galatea' with the eyes of another Pygmalion; I am witness to her agency. This act of witnessing takes place in the fleshiness of my body; and so the ivory statue is reincarnate once again through my flesh, muscle and bone. I am no longer the watcher of history; I am the beholder, the one who holds. I hold those women close in my body as I dance in the museum. In so doing, I bear witness to previously lost, appropriated histories. In so doing, I bear witness to history (Crawley 2018a: 67-8).

¹⁰⁹ I am aware of the arguably negative connotation of the word 'complicit' (in the sense of being an accomplice to a crime): I choose it here not to suggest that the heroines whose stories I am dancing are responsible for the crime of their own rape (although they do, albeit unwillingly or unknowingly, in the cases of Myrrha and Philomela, perform criminal acts – incest, murder), but to underline the complex ethical implications of relationships between viewer and performer, and between performer and character. The viewer must come to terms with the ethical implications of viewing, of by-standing; my performance in the museum calls the viewer to recognise his/her 'complicity' in standing by and watching history, but then to become witness to these lost or misappropriated stories and, through such acts of witnessing, yet further ethically implicated in their remaking and reimagining.

The next question then becomes one that asks how the viewer in the museum is in turn transformed into a witness too, a beholder of history, in the action of viewing the performance of *'Galatea'*. I think here of Susan Melrose's reminder that in considering performance 'we must never speak about the body but only ever of the bodies – watched bodies and watching bodies' (Melrose cited in Etchells and Phelan 1999: 74). If one considers the dance performance of *'Galatea'* in the museum in this light, then one can begin to see how the performance itself becomes an action of 'complex ghosting' (ibid) where the dead live on in our present, witnessed and witnessing. Perhaps this is what is meant when we talk somewhat glibly of performance 'enlivening' the museum's displays¹¹⁰: yet this particular dance in the museum is 'more than a re-animation of ancient artefacts; it is the resurrection of history's remains' (Crawley 2018a: 68).

Resurrecting History's Remains: a Return to the Fragment

At the opening symposium of the Kings College London research project 'Modern classicisms' which explores the enduring legacy of Greek and Roman visual culture in contemporary art, artist Marc Quinn recently made a case for the classical fragmentary:

If all classical culture had been perfectly kept, we wouldn't be interested...if it's fragmented, it has time in it.¹¹¹

Quinn's proposition is a striking one for my own explorations. It is the fragmentary

¹¹⁰ This is a thought that is currently trending about discussions about dance performance in the historical museum. Dance is often seen as a way of animating the museum collection: in particular, I am thinking of how Arts Council England describes British dance company Made by Katie Green's *The Imagination Museum* (2014-2017) which 'brings stories behind historical collections to life through contemporary dance.' (see Arts Council England website [online] available from <<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/case-studies/bringing-museum-collections-life-audiences-east-midlands>>) [30th August 2018]

¹¹¹ Marc Quinn speaking at 'Modern Classicisms: Classical Art and Contemporary Artists in Dialogue,' 10th November 2017 at KCL, London. The related research project's website can be found online at <www.modernclassisms.com> [30th August 2018]

that contains time; taking this further, we might say that it is from the fragmentary that time might escape. It is through the fragmentary that the past may escape to the present; it is through the fragmentary that the past can speak to the present and, conversely, the present speak to the past. It is through the fragmentary that Clio dances with Terpsichore and, with Mnemosyne as witness to their dancing, they are able to resist the historical *status quo*.¹¹² As I edge towards a conclusion here, I hope to bring together ideas of the fragmentary with ideas of the monumental to make a claim for dance performance in the museum as the ‘fragmentary monumental.’ In so doing, I will return to the grounding philosophical framework of my argument – namely, that complex web of relationships between time, narrative, history and memory, as outlined by philosopher Paul Ricœur (1983, 1984, 1985, 2004). In developing my idea of the fragmentary monumental out of Ricœur’s theoretical writings, I hope to unpick its relation to one of the defining choreographic tropes of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*: what I have termed above, and first termed in my rehearsal studio notes, as a ‘stillness-that-is-not-quite-stillness.’ In using the notion of the fragmentary monumental as a gateway to finding this ‘stillness-that-is-not quite-stillness,’ I would like to respond to performance theorist André Lepecki’s (2006) notion of the ‘still-act’ in order to address what the fragmentary monumental might mean for both history and for dance. For my choreographic ‘stillness-that-is-not-quite-stillness’ speaks to Lepecki’s still act as a strategy for looking back. This is a looking back in both senses of the word; not only in terms of returning the ‘gaze’ but in its relation to temporality, and through the entire dance work’s durational quality and valuing of slowness and stillness, in terms of looking back through time at history. In the museum, Clio-History and Terpsichore-Dance dance together, watched

¹¹² It is essential to point out here that I am claiming a positive sense for the fragmentary, particularly in terms of my feminist critical framework.

by Mnemosyne-Memory, in a dance where we not only remember those dead and gone, but in which we are invited to take their hands and dance with them.¹¹³

At this juncture, it is important to reconsider one of the grounding philosophical frameworks of my argument, that of French philosopher Paul Ricœur's work on the complex interrelationships that exist between time, history and narrative, first outlined in chapter three. As I previously proposed in that chapter (see p. 63 above), my argument hinges here not only on Ricœur's seminal writings on time and narrative from the early 1980s but also on his later writing, *History Memory Forgetting* (2004). A key point for Ricœur is how, with history, 'everything starts [...] from testimony' (Ricœur 2004: 147). The connection that Ricœur makes between memorial as recollection (or, as I have been terming it, given my museum context, *re-collection*), and testimony, chimes with my idea of the importance of the witnessing of classical heroines through my dance performance in the museum. Again, as I pointed out in chapter three (see pp. 64-5 above), performance studies scholar Baz Kershaw (2011) usefully situates Ricœur's argument in terms of museum theatre, making the crucial point that 'some things are not remembered, and sometimes their records retained as a prompt to continuing testimony, more fully than others' (Kershaw 2011: 126). Kershaw's 'degrees of ephemerality' and how memory is triggered in 'a relatively unpredictable, contradictory and *disordered* manner' (Kershaw 2011: 129, original emphasis) is again important to note. For me, this idea of the disorder and dislocation of memory points to the notion of a reassembling of the fragmentary. We might compare this to Bruce Brown's counter-model of

¹¹³ I am indebted here to Baz Kershaw's rereading of Joseph Roach (1996, 1998) as performance in the museum as a trick of necromancy: 'it follows that the qualities of necromancy could be part of performance, as its creativity, often literally, bodies forth absent – or, at least, invisible – pasts through transposing what is dead, but not entirely gone for good, into the present' (Kershaw 2011: 136).

assemblage in his study of pre-Columbian culture in Peru where ‘in opposition to contemporary culture’s fragmentation, freezing and packaging of memories’ (Brown 2000: 51), dislocated fragments of narrative thread are repaired, not in a return to a pre-existing whole but in a recombination of previously disparate elements. Such an idea also speaks to John Rajchman’s theory of ‘non-monumentalizable time’ given through gaps and intersections (Rajchman 1999: 153-4). Interestingly for my study, Smith (2011) connects Rajchman’s theory to Fiona Wilkie (2007) on the story of Penelope in Homer and how *weaving* a story always leaves passages and gaps. As classicist Mary Beard (2017: 4) points out, in Homer’s *Odyssey*, Penelope only begins to weave once she is told to ‘shut up’ by a man. I cannot help but think here of Philomela too and how, in the Ovid version, she weaves the story of her rape, once her voice has been denied her. Indeed, Beard also reminds us that although:

Ovid may have emphatically silenced his women in their transformation or mutilation [...] he also suggested that communication could transcend the human voice, and that women were not so easily silenced. Philomela lost her tongue, but she still managed to denounce her rapist by weaving the story into a tapestry. (ibid: 41)

Might dance in the museum work in the same way that weaving does in Ovid and Homer, exploiting the gaps in the story, reclaiming a positive notion of what it means to be partial and fragmentary?

In contrast with Rajchman’s ‘non-monumentalizable time,’ Ricœur’s study goes on to establish what makes for monumental history. This, according to Ricœur, is driven by a desire to both emulate and improve upon a past, and thereby focuses on a connecting series of the ‘great moments’ of history (Ricœur 2004: 290) that show the path to a better future. This focus on the great moments, on the monumental, necessarily means the loss of smaller, no less important, moments. Again, what of

those fragments of history and of the memory of that history? What of the lost, the broken, the cast away, surfacing only partially in our collective memory?

For me, these questions once again speak back to dance scholar Gabriele Brandstetter's (2016) work on the fragmentary nature of performance in the museum as offering an alternative to traditional historiography¹¹⁴ and how that which she terms the 'museum in transition' can serve as a cultural model for restructuring traditional categories of narrative. Following on from Jean-François Lyotard's (1979) *La Condition Postmoderne*, Brandstetter posits the 'historeme' or the anecdotal or unpublished as a contrast to the *grand récit* (Lyotard's 'meta-narrative') and uses dance in the museum, citing re-doings of postmodern dance history in the museum (such as those in Boris Charmatz' *Musée de la danse*) to state how performance can challenge critical historiography. She suggests that while traditional historiography tells history with a beginning, middle and end, it is performance in the museum that can offer an opportunity for the anecdotal (the as yet unpublished) to be revealed, and this precisely because of performance's *fragmentary* nature. Indeed, one of the strongest arguments for including performance within the repertoire of interpretative strategies a museum has at its disposal is that 'it provides museums with a resource that helps them fill some of the inevitable gaps in their collections and the narratives that they tell' (Jackson 2011: 21). It is in this recovery of distant, hidden, fragmented or marginalised voices through performance that an attempt is made to re-present that which is absent.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Michel Foucault's theory (2008 [1969]) of a 'general' history in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.

The Fragmentary Monumental

The archaeological museum is often a repository of *fragments of monuments*, which are repositories of fragmentary cultural memory. Classicist Helen Lovatt (2013) suggests that an exploration of the monumental brings together the two sides of the gaze, ‘the powerful and disempowered, subject and object, same and other, male and female, to explore the end result of epic: *the traces that are left behind*’ (Lovatt 2013: 347, my emphasis). To illustrate her point, Lovatt uses an episode drawn from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*; that of Perseus, he who slays the snake-haired gorgon Medusa, whose female gaze petrifies anything that dares look it in the eye.¹¹⁵ For Patricia Salzman-Mitchell (2003), Perseus is the embodiment of the male gaze, the mobile hero confronting the bound woman; Keith (1999: 222) too analyses in Perseus’ gaze the ultimate male gaze. As Lovatt reminds us, Medusa symbolises the monstrous-feminine, a figure who has been appropriated by both psychoanalysis and feminism (Sarton 1971, Cixous 1975, Rimell 2006), a ‘pin-up for female objectification [...] the petrifying image of a mask-like female face [...] a synecdoche for women in epic: monster, uncanny, associated with the divine, powerful, at the same time as she is raped, objectified, an object conquered and exchanged by men to give them power.’ (Lovatt 2013: 356-7). Significantly, classics scholar Mary Beard (2017) points to the decapitated head of Medusa as a defining image of the radical separation – real, cultural and imaginary - between women and power in Western history: ‘one of the most potent ancient symbols of male mastery over the destructive dangers that the very possibility of female power represented’ (Beard 2017: 71). Beard brings the image right up to date with an exploration of how this same image is

¹¹⁵ Interestingly, at the end of Ovid’s story of Philomela, Philomela too is presented as a spectacle, a monster, a Fury, not unlike the gorgon: *sicut erat sparsis furiali caede capillis* [As she was, with her streaming hair drenched with the blood of the mad carnage] (*Met.* 6.657, Salzman-Mitchell’s translation, 2005: 147).

still used today to separate women from political power, citing as examples such as newspaper headlines dubbing the UK Prime Minister Theresa May ‘the Medusa of Maidenhead’ to the even nastier merchandise on offer to supporters of Donald Trump during the US election campaign of 2016, such as mugs and T-shirts offering an image of Trump-Perseus brandishing the dripping head of Clinton-Medusa. As Beard concludes, ‘if ever you were doubtful about the extent to which the exclusion of women from power is culturally embedded or unsure of the continued strength of classical ways of formulating it – well, I give you Trump and Clinton, Perseus and Medusa, and rest my case’ (ibid: 79).

Furthermore, the head of Medusa, the gorgon’s head, the object held aloft by the victorious Perseus, was itself popularly represented in antiquity on an object known as a *gorgoneion*, an apotropaic amulet. On this object, which would have been one well known to Ovid, Medusa’s face becomes monument, that visible sign which stimulates an act of remembrance, ‘permanent, built to last, [that] has none of the vulnerability of the human body’ (Dyer 1995: 127). I wonder how the live, female body in the museum, surrounded by the fragmentary monumental, might itself defy Dyer and become monumental through the fragmented dance and through its very vulnerability? Might the Medusa’s head one day dance its way through the museum alongside her body? When asking how the epic gaze interacts with epic acts of preservation and remembrance (which I would argue is the domain of the archaeological museum), Lovatt too evokes the gaps, defining the gaze as ‘the disturbance in the field of vision which reveals the gap that troubles and draws us in’ (Lovatt 2003: 374) and asking what the gap in the epic monument might be. She concludes that the gap must ‘surely be indeterminacy, elusiveness’ (ibid). Might it be

live dance in the museum that offers that indeterminacy, that elusiveness, at least for the fleeting moments of performance? I would like to evoke dance here as the fragmentary monumental, and I wonder if such an action might be one means of resituating women on the *inside* of power, on the inside of the house of the tyrant but on their own terms. As one last example of how dance might do this, I give you *Medusa*, the final piece of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*.



Fig. 21: *Medusa*, part of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*, Ashmolean Museum, 2018.
Photograph: Brandon Kahn

*Medusa*¹¹⁶

Choreographically, the opening of *Medusa* began as a precisely measured reversal of the closing moments of ‘*Galatea*’ as I moved slowly along the glass of the balcony above the main entrance to the museum. These first gestures of *Medusa* echoed the last gestures of ‘*Galatea*,’ replicated but turned inside out, the same but different, ghosts of movements gone before, as time reversed itself. I paused to look

¹¹⁶ I invite the reader to view the accompanying video here (*Medusa* - 37:21-47:42).

back at the visitor-witnesses beneath me, tried to catch their gaze, reached my arms to try to break out of the glass enclosing me, slowly realised the impossibility of such an endeavour. In this silent ‘stillness-that-was-not-quite-stillness’ gestures were doomed to repetition, and harrowing stories played out time and time again. In constructing the choreography of Medusa, I wanted to explore the idea of the ashamed and frightened young woman behind the monstrous apotropaic ‘monument’ (i.e. the head of Medusa as apotropaic object). I wanted to subvert Medusa’s role in history as the one whose hair is made of snakes and whose monstrous gaze turns to stone anyone she looks at. Rather than dance Medusa as the one who petrifies, I wanted to dance Medusa’s own petrification, her own metamorphosis, which has made her take on the mask of the monster. I returned to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* 4.753-803 where it is Perseus who gets to tell her story; again, the man speaks for the woman, as he brandishes her impotent head around for all to see. It is Ovid who tells us that Medusa was only transformed into a monster because it was a punishment; her crime – having been raped by Poseidon. In *Medusa*, the motif of the snakes – a continuous, circular movement of the hands, recalling the *helissein* (a coiling, twisting movement) of Roman pantomime dancers (see Appendix 1) – emanates from within my pelvis and torso, a manifestation of her fear and shame. The snake-like movement of the hands, wrists and fingers become an increasingly inescapable binding motion, which gradually overtakes the whole body. The coiling motion develops from the arms and torso into the hips and legs, pulling me into deliberately repetitive and accumulative sequences of *ronds de jambes* and turns, which trace circular figure of eight patterns on the floor (see accompanying video at 41:09 onwards). Enclosed within the glass confines of the vitrine-like balcony, the circular phrase accelerates, Medusa’s transformation an unstoppable force hurtling through my body and the space

surrounding me. This frenetic phrase was punctuated by moments of stillness-that-was-not-quite-stillness, hands crowning the head, snake-like above the mask. In the moment of stillness, I wished to subvert the idea of stillness as petrification and Medusa's petrifying gaze. After a long moment's stillness, a stillness-that-was-not-quite-stillness, in which my breath danced heavily as my heart rate slowed, the snaking hands motif would begin again and the accumulative phrase repeat to the other side of my glass enclosure. Again, the repetition of the movement served to stress the repetition of this particular story through time and history, the impossibility of escape from it. Rape and blame doomed to repeat throughout the centuries; the woman punished, deemed monstrous. As the dance came to a final 'stillness', facing the Ashmolean's colossal front doors, my playing of the apotropaic gaze was broken by my removing the mask from my face (see video at 46:14). My hands stretched the mask out in offering to the visitor-witnesses surrounding me on all sides - below me, above me, opposite me – as if to say, 'You have only seen the mask that history has given her, but she is a woman. This too is Medusa.' I revolved slowly, my arms stretched out to offer the mask to every viewer whose gaze I was able catch. In those final moments, I tried not only to return the gaze, but also to hold it, acknowledging the moment of witness. We are all Medusas. We are all witnesses to this story.

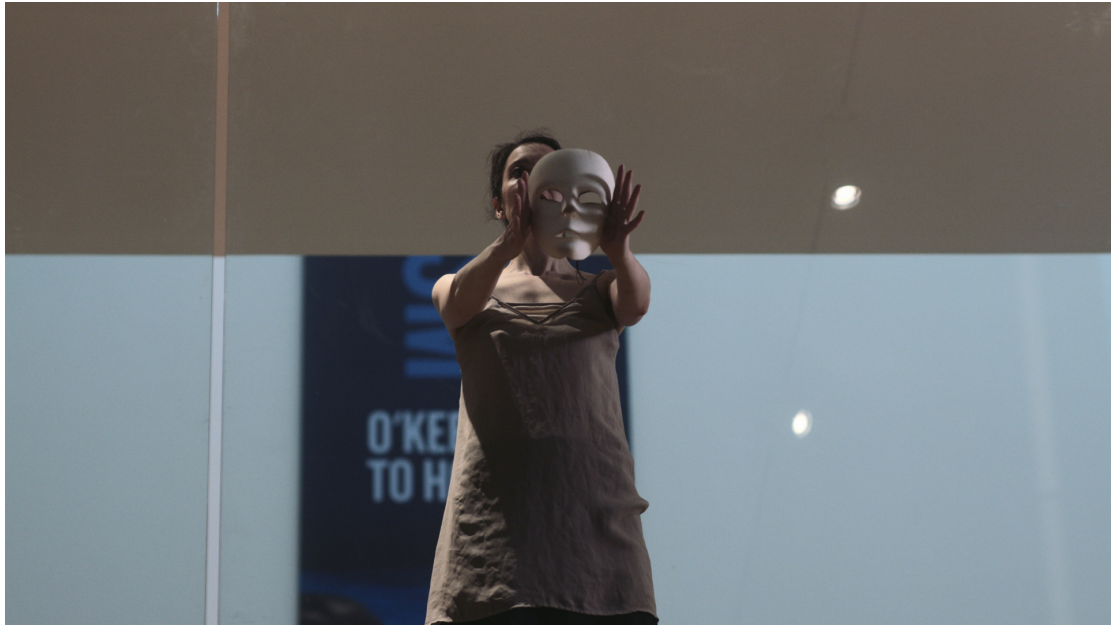


Fig. 22: *Medusa*, Ashmolean Museum, 2018. Photograph: Brandon Kahn

For myself as choreographer-dancer, *Medusa* is an example of dance in the museum as the moment of what I term the ‘fragmentary monumental,’ the moment when the apotropaic monument itself is broken, that moment which Ricœur speaks of as the ‘rupture of memory’ (Ricœur 2004: 11). This is a moment of resistance, a dance of resistance. Is it Mnemosyne who herself hands the hammer over to Clio and Terpsichore in this dance of resistance? As an answer here, I would like to relate this moment of rupture to performance theorist André Lepecki’s understanding of the still-act, a term he borrows from anthropologist Nadia Serematakis to ‘describe moments when a subject interrupts historical flow and *practices* historical interrogation.’ (Lepecki 2006:15). As Serematakis herself suggests:

Against the flow of the present [...] Stillness is the moment when the buried, the discarded and the forgotten escape to the social surface of awareness like life-supporting oxygen. It is *the moment of exit from historical dust* (Serematakis 1994: 12, my emphasis)

This idea of the moment of exit from historical dust echoes my imagining the ancient sculptures in the archaeological museum shaking off their plaster and marble as they

are reawakened and re-fleshed through my dancing. In his reading of Serematakis, Lepecki proposes that

to exit from historical dust is to refuse the sedimentation of history into neat layers. The still-act shows how the dust of history, in modernity, may be agitated in order to blur artificial divisions between [...] the mobile and the immobile. (Lepecki 2006:15)

How does my practice in the museum blur the divide between what constitutes mobility and what constitutes stillness speak back to both Lepecki and Serematakis? Here I would like to posit what I term the stillness of the dance, that ‘stillness-that-is-not-quite-stillness’, as an important choreographic strategy that allows the dance in the museum to step out of the linear temporality of representation and into a different economy of time and presence. Here, the dance quite literally steps into a synchronic, fragmented temporality. No longer the past preterit of history, we are in the present of performance; ‘echoing the “still act”, the still dance allows for the production of a different temporality, one that is no longer chronological, but unstable, jumbled up, contractile, fragmentary’ (Crawley 2018a: 69-70).

I would also like to suggest here that this choreographic stillness-that-is-not-quite-stillness speaks to Lepecki’s still act as a strategy for looking back. This is a looking back in both senses; not only in terms of returning the gaze but, in its relation to temporality, and through the dance’s durational quality and valuing of slowness and stillness, of looking back through time at history. Lepecki’s own conclusion is that the still act might enable dance to escape the prison of its irretrievable presentness:

To track the coexistence of multiple temporalities within the temporality of dance, to identify multiple presents in the dancing performance, to expand the notion of the present from its melancholic fate, from its entrapment in the microscopy of the now, to the extension of the present along lines of whatever

still acts, to reveal the intimacy of duration, are all theoretical and political moves producing and proposing alternative affects through which dance studies could extract itself from the melancholic entrapment at the vanishing point. (Lepecki 2006: 131)

The durational aspect of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* in the museum means that the ‘stillness-that-is-not-quite-stillness’ is about an extension or duration through time, that of a present act reaching backwards and forwards. On one level, the durational aspect of the work provides a solution for how it might exist at least quasi-permanently in the museum collection. I am drawn here to Lara Shalson’s 2012 reading of Kira O’Reilly’s gallery-sited durational performance *Stair Falling* as ‘an invitation to slow down and witness the inevitable, to inhabit that experience which takes us *out of time*’ (Shalson, 2012: 105, my emphasis). Might a durational performance in the archaeological museum also take us out of time, in that extension of present into the past and the future? Together with Lepecki, I am attempting to stretch the duration of present-ness both forwards and backwards in time. In such a way, I would hope that the dance practice of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* in the archaeological museum might be one possible response to Lepecki, and one way in which dance’s extraction from the ‘perpetual vanishing point’ (Siegal, 1972) might occur. The past, like the dance, does not entirely disappear; through memory, through recollection, it lives on in our present, evermore alive and evermore fleshy, continually moving forwards through space and time into the future. In the archaeological museum, those dormant women who for centuries have been waiting in silence and in stillness suddenly rise up out of their glass cases, they shake off their dust, and with Clio and Terpsichore duelling, and Mnemosyne witnessing, they too begin to dance.

9. Bodily Musings: Conclusion

*What does it mean to be a fragmented body?
To be scattered in a thousand pieces?
Missing hand - missing elbow – missing foot –
To be a body without a head;
a statue without a face.
To be faceless,
To be nameless,
To be almost.
Upright, rooted to the spot, enclosed, resisting petrification.
There is something about being fixed, being held.
And trying to escape
Faceless, nameless, ancient women of the past...
If I can unfix you, I can give you flesh.*

- Rehearsal notes, April 2018

This thesis set out to study what happens when dance enters the archaeological museum. More specifically, it asked: *what happens to our relationship with time and history when we dance, and when we view dance, in the archaeological museum?* It posited dance as a site of counter-memory, and asked whether dance allows a new, alternative visibility in the museum for those bodies, most specifically those female bodies, previously unrepresented, misrepresented or rendered at least partially invisible by history. The long-term choreographic practice-as-research project, *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*, sought to find answers to these questions, informed by two parallel critical frameworks – namely, explorations of history, time, memory and narrative after Paul Ricœur’s seminal hermeneutic phenomenological work, and feminist critical theory building on classical notions of the gaze – as well as by

engaging with the practice of other choreographers making work for the art history museum, by choreographic practice and performance, and by theoretical and poetic writing.

After the *Introduction* outlining the general argument and aims of this thesis, chapter two *Clio's Question: Museum Fever?* took a broad view of the field of dance performance in the museum, especially in terms of the current explosion of the phenomenon in the art museum, engaging with the wide-ranging body of literature that has been produced in response to this 'museum fever.' It explored key terms and concepts marking the current debate – counter-memory, counter-archive, and body-as-archive – interrogating scholarship by Gabriele Brandstetter (2015 [1995]), Rebecca Schneider (2001, 2011), Diana Taylor (2003), and André Lepecki (2010). It sought to ground the thesis project firmly in relation to dance studies, before turning to the wider context of current museum professional practice, interrogating concepts of materiality and immateriality.

Chapter three *Terpsichore's Question: Philosophising Dance?* introduced the two parallel methodological frameworks grounding the thesis: i) hermeneutic phenomenology after French philosopher Paul Ricœur's explorations of time, history, memory and narrative (1983, 1984, 1985, 2004) and ii) feminist inquiry, building on a re-interrogation of a vast body of scholarship in both classics and in dance and performance studies in relation to the gaze. This chapter also presented arguments for practice-as-research as a valid research method for this project.

Chapter four, *Dancing Out of the Theatre and Into the Museum* opened the debate into a field review of dance practice in the museum in the UK today, looking towards three choreographic projects for the art history museum which have significantly impacted my own thinking and practice. The chapter examined three central case studies which all took place in two of the UK's major art history institutions in 2016 - Pablo Bronstein's *Historical Dances in an Antique Setting* (Tate Britain, April-October 2016), Manuel Pelmus and Alexandra Pirici's *Public Collection* (Tate Modern, June-July 2016) and the National Gallery residency of the *Dancing Museums* project (National Gallery, November 2016). Whilst acknowledging that each of the three practices are very different, I noted how common questions arise within them; questions about what it means to reconstruct historical art objects, to re-imagine or re-contextualise them in another art-form, to 'copy' an original whilst making it a springboard for new and distinct work, and thereby to re-view a historical collection and perhaps even reclaim, or to reimagine, history. This last point specifically serves the main thrust of this thesis' argument.

The following chapters then turned to an examination of my own practice-as-research, as it emerged for and in the Ashmolean, with each chapter focussing in particular on one of the four choreographic fragments that together make up *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*. Chapter five, *Re-Collection in the Museum: Remembering, Dismembering and 'Performance as Archive'*, introduced my choreographic practice-as-research, relating choreographing in the museum to ideas of remembering and dismembering and how we might 're-collect' history through dance performance in the museum. In this chapter, I argued for 'performance as

archive’ as a methodology for historical research, charting the early development of *Myrrha*.

Chapter six, *Masking the Dance, Unmasking History?*, looked to the importance of the mask in my museum dance practice and focused on the *Philomela* fragment. Chapter seven, *Sisters Resisting the Gaze: Releasing Classical Heroines Back Into the Museum*, built on the previous chapter’s argument, investigating theories of the gaze in classical scholarship and exploring how I ‘borrowed’ these theories in relation to the development of my choreographic practice in the museum. The chapter made particular reference to feminist classical scholar Patricia Salzman-Mitchell’s work on the gaze in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, itself the ancient source text for my choreographic work, and in particular her pointing to the importance and potential of a female ‘witnessing gaze’ in Ovid’s work.

Finally, chapter eight, *Witnessing the ‘Still Dance’* developed notions of this witnessing gaze in terms of its relation to mobility and stillness. The first half of the chapter focused on the development of the dance fragment, ‘*Galatea*’, to posit ‘stillness-that-is-not-quite stillness’ as a choreographic strategy that allows dance to step out of the linear temporality of representation and into a different economy of time and presence. The chapter then returned to the key philosophical underpinnings the thesis: ideas of history, memory, narrative, fragments and monuments, and how these feed into my dance practice in the museum. Focussing on the final dance fragment, *Medusa*, this closing chapter concluded by seeking to claim dance performance in the museum as the ‘fragmentary monumental,’ an action that might be

able to resituate women on the inside of power but on their own terms, and, eventually, to enable an alternative means of viewing history.

The dance practice *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* is at the heart of this thesis, and, underpinned by the dual philosophical frameworks, it is the practice-as-research that speaks to its central research questions. Those questions were: *Is this a practice about remembering - or dismembering - an ancient dance form? What happens when this re-/dismembering is put on display and exhibited in the museum? How does the live female dancer in the museum allow certain buried histories to re-surface, and to be re-collected? How does dance exploit gaps between temporalities to allow for these buried or previously unrealized histories to surface? How does dance claim a new space for the live, female body in the museum, and therefore in history?* This thesis has explored these questions about the dancing female body in the ancient historical museum and its gender political dimensions from an interdisciplinary feminist and practice-as-research perspective. By analysing the encounter between the ephemeral performance of the moving body and archival objects within the setting of a museum space, I have argued that the presentation of my own dancer's body as both exhibited object and empowered moving agent can subvert narratives of female as an objectified artefact subjected to the gaze. My claim is that dance here has the power to subvert or destabilize the museum's traditional logic of representation and its linear and patrilineal narratives.

This practice-as-research into the ancient Roman dance form of *tragoedia saltata*, through the durational practice *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*, has not been interested in any sort of reconstruction or re-enactment of the historical form of

dance. Rather, it has attempted to revive or re-imagine ancient sources to create new choreographic strategies and movement qualities. The practice – of which a large portion was undertaken as part of my residency as visiting choreographer at the APGRD – clearly marks the historiographical and receptionist perspective in my hermeneutic and phenomenological approach. The aim of the practice has been to create dialogues between ancient sources and contemporary choreographic approaches. I argue that a live dance performance in the context of an archaeological, historical museum opens up a space to allow certain gaps for the representation and historiography of silenced women. Such an encounter with the body as living archive can sensitise audiences for the experience of being in-between and for different, complex time-space-body relations (cf. Ricœur), including its micro-political power and gender relations (of stillness and movement). I have claimed that performing dance in a museum can subvert the predominating historical narratives and fictions of completeness or linearity traditionally represented within a museum. It can create a living site for ‘counter-memory’ (cf. Schneider and Foucault), introducing the fragmented, unpublished, anecdotal and unrealised histories of misrepresented and silenced women. In following the lineage of Brandstetter and her readings of Warburg and Hofmannsthal who refer very much to modernity’s concepts of a dialogue with the past, I have attempted to emphasise, following Schneider, an idea of gesture as related to an interconnectedness of temporalities, focussing with Taylor and Lepecki on gesture as an archive where the written or museal narrative loses its hierarchical status.

By remembering and dismembering the gestural qualities of ancient dance form, *tragoedia saltata*, as well as certain selected passages of Ovid’s text, I have

employed the fragmentary as a radical means to resurrect buried female histories. Within this framework, ‘stillness-that-is-not-quite-stillness’ has been an important choreographic strategy that allows the dance in the museum to step out of the linear temporality of representation and into a different economy of time and presence. Here dance quite literally steps into a synchronic, fragmented temporality. No longer the past preterit of history, we are in the present of performance. Echoing Lepecki’s reading of Serematakis’ ‘still-act’, the still dance allows for the production of a different temporality, one that is no longer chronological, but unstable, jumbled up, contractile, fragmentary. My choreographic stillness-that-is-not-quite-stillness speaks to the still dance as a strategy for looking back in both senses of the word; not only in terms of returning the gaze but also, through the work’s durational quality and its valuing of slowness and stillness, to looking back through time at history.

The invitation offered to the viewer–witness of *Likely Terpsichore?* (*Fragments*) at the Ashmolean – and as outlined on the exhibition guide available to them (see Appendix 2) - was to value the fragmentary nature of the durational piece in the museum, especially in this slowing and stillness. The durational nature of the whole piece was essential, as a radical subversion of the institutionalized, linear temporality of the museum. In order for dance to become such a radical act, an act of ‘radical archaeology,’ it needed to be able to enter the collection, as fully and as ‘permanently’ as it could (in spite of dance’s so-called ephemerality). In this respect, my practice marked a clear departure from the event-nature of dance performance in the art history museum, such as Charmatz’ *Musée de la danse* for example. The fragmentary nature of the piece meant that my experience of its duration was very different from that of the museum visitors who could come and go at will.

For myself as dancer, the durational nature of the piece meant that it was physically and emotionally relentless. Inevitably, accumulative feelings of utter exhaustion were part of the durational experience for me, as the dancer. And yet, this exhaustion somehow felt 'right'. Two entries in my choreographic notebook, written directly after the durational performances, attest to these feelings:

So, I survived to tell the tale. I am shattered, exhausted. Exhaustion: the feeling of telling the story for millennia, to keep reliving it all – rape, birth, death. Reliving it all through my body, in my body. Worn out.

I find that the body's inner music is marked by rhythm not by melody.

I find that the mask is not about possession, but incarnation; in fact, my own awareness becomes sharper, more acute.

It is relentless. "Make my voice heard", they cry. "Give me your body."

I'm like a ghost wandering these corridors. Closed in my glass box. It is relentless.

Looking at the mask, I ask it: "whose story do you want me to tell today?"

There is emotional and physical exhaustion, but also a deep awareness within.

This is an awareness of what changes each time. It is never the same. The light in the museum is never the same. The moment is never the same. The movement is never the same. You might say that the script is the same, but there are so many different ways of saying the same words.

- 17th April 2018: choreographic notebook entry

Sometimes it is very busy. Groups crowd and stare, but sometimes people don't even look up. They don't see.

Sometimes though, there are many eyes on the stairs, watching me through the glass. The children especially shout or whisper. They look. Even when their museum guide tells them not to, or shepherds them on, they turn back. They do not avert their eyes. I wonder why the guide tells them not to look. Is this all too subversive? Am I too dangerous?

Sometimes I prefer the quieter times, when I am alone with these stories and these women. Or when there is an attentive viewer, one-on-one, who stays the course; who chooses to join me and watches everything; when a connection is made, eye-to-eye, face-to-face. Then, I feel recognised.

Sometimes they take photos. They are surprised, shocked, delighted by the dance. And I think, yes, do nothing, hide behind your lens, just take a photo, just point at me, frame me, put me in focus, and I'll just carry on, still and always shut in this glass box from which I can't escape, and from where you can't hear my screams. You just carry on regardless, taking photos of me. Philomela feels this especially and it makes her rage, rage like a caged animal, a specimen at a zoo.

I wonder if they care.

But then, a direct look in their eyes and I realise that something is getting through.

I am tired. I feel the exhaustion at the end. It gets harder, but this is it. The exhaustion, the repetition of female stories forced to repeat themselves, play themselves day after day through history. The pain, the fatigue, the bruised and

broken body, the traces of breath and sweat on the glass, blood on the floor, the traces of the presence of my body here in this place.

My body now remains in this place, as do the bodies of Galatea, Myrrha, Philomela and Medusa.

- 24th April 2018, choreographic notebook entry

Whilst this thesis has undeniably been from the perspective of the choreographer-dancer, it seems useful as I draw to my final conclusions to point the reader to some observations from viewer-witnesses, who were visitors to the Ashmolean and saw the durational performance (see Appendix 3). This small sample indicates a direction that this research could follow in the future - that is to say, to try to understand how, if and when dance becomes part of a museum collection, it might change visitors' perceptions of that collection. In term of re-viewing the museum collection, and re-thinking what the collection represents, the physicality of the dance and the connections that it was able to make with the viewer-witness on a visceral, emotional bodily level was certainly doing something important. It had more than entered the collection; it was re-fleshing it, highlighting history's cracks and filling them with the dance. I think again of the fresco from the Golden House of Nero on display in the Ashmolean in which Myrrha is nothing but a thin sliver of myrrh-tree, a slender branch; behind the glass walkway above galleries 32 and 33, in my dancing body, she was again flesh and blood. My body gave her a body, my dancing a means of re-incarnating her, resurrecting her, somehow recollecting her remains.

This thesis has addressed an important and considerable gap in current scholarship and that is in its study of dance in the archaeological museum. Whereas previous studies have considered temporal relations in terms of dance in the art history museum, this thesis breaks new ground in focussing on temporal relationships when dance enters the archaeological museum, that house of time *par excellence*. Furthermore, previous studies (e.g. Brandstetter, 2015) have chosen to refer to modernity's concept of a dialogue with the past (Warburg, Hofmannsthal), whereas I have emphasised Schneider's – and my own - ideas of gesture and how those ideas relate to the interconnectedness of time. Moreover, the dance scholarship offered in this thesis builds on historiographical approaches *through* practice, and that practice-as-research is at the heart of this thesis is a new development in terms of the fields it straddles, situated at the intersection between classics and dance studies. This thesis also affirms dance practice as a vital and necessary base for inquiry into ancient history, culture and performance. It speaks back to classical archaeology itself as a sensory, embodied practice and how that practice might meet the museum. Its subversion of the museum's institutional narrativising points to the nature of dance as an act of 'radical archaeology,' asserting dance not merely as an art object or as educational project to enliven the collection, but as an integral element of that collection, and therefore of our understanding of the histories represented within it. In such a way, dance is able to give a new, or at least alternative, visibility to those bodies previously rendered partially invisible by history. Through dance, something else begins to seep through the cracks between the fragments.

So, in conclusion, looking forwards at the end of a project that has been all about looking back, what future research projects might continue the thinking

contained within it? This thesis has very naturally opened up interdisciplinary fields of enquiry, research and collaboration bringing together dance-researchers and practitioners, scholars of classical history and culture, archaeologists and museum professionals, and there are many more potential layers to dig through, in order to bring new understandings of ancient history and culture to the surface. There are therefore several directions in which the research might move, but first and foremost perhaps is the potential for on-going and continued work using dance as a method for historiography - or for 'radical archaeology' as I have come to term what I am doing - with archaeological museums both in the UK and abroad (whether at the Ashmolean, or the British Museum, or the Louvre). In particular, I am personally very interested in developing the practice-as-research method developed in this thesis to work with other 'material' remains of other ancient dance forms, especially dance in the ancient Greek tragic chorus. As Elswit (2018) points out, Yana Zarifi (2007) has traced the ways in which Greek dance cultures informed the staging of bodies in the ancient work, but apart from Zarifi's study, very little research on dance in the tragic chorus (and especially through practice) has been completed to date. This thesis has developed a useful and, I would argue, a necessary methodology for investigating ancient culture and history through dance practice as a complement to the study of the material remains (texts, vase paintings, etc.) that we do have. At least in terms of the dancing ancient chorus, such a practice-as-research method as outlined here could be employed to fill a very significant gap in the research. As stated briefly above, there is also further potential for researching how the visitor's experience is affected by dance's entry into the archaeological museum through a longer and wider scale study of visitor responses to the dance. Here I am thinking not only of how dance might affect the museum visit itself, but also of how the museum and the visitor together

construct and (re)-view history and cultural memory. There is also the possibility of taking this thinking forward into studies of why the fragment and fragmentary are so important to both artists and classical scholars and what more the ‘fragmentary monumental’ might have to offer to the fields of classics, ancient history and historiography.¹¹⁷

In conclusion, I wish to return to one final question, and that is the question contained in the title of this thesis: *What remains?* Now that my dance has left the museum, what has been left behind? What traces of the dance fragments remain? Certainly, there were - there are - material traces of my dance’s presence in the museum: the marks of sweat along the glass surfaces, and at one point, traces of blood on the floor from my bruised and bleeding toes. Just like the Romano-Egyptian women whose faces had spurred me on to tell this story in the first place, my DNA is somehow now present in the museum. My ‘remains’ remain alongside theirs. But, on a metaphysical level, and despite the ‘ongoing-ness’ and repetition of the durational performance, what happens to that museum space when the physical body is no longer there? What of the immaterial traces of my dance? What of the ghost of the dancer behind the glass? Has my dance changed the way in which the visitor-witness sees that space, even when the dancer has disappeared? As one viewer remarked to me, they can no longer look up to the Ashmolean’s balcony without seeing the dancer there, moving in stillness and silence behind the glass. Something of the dancer, of the dance, still remains. Something of it will always remain: in my memory, in your memory, in the memory of the museum itself, in cultural memory. So, as I draw to a

¹¹⁷ I am a member of the newly established British Academy funded research network ‘The Art of Fragments’ developed by classicist Laura Swift which aims to bring together academics and creative practitioners around the theme of ‘fragments’, using the form of the fragment and the concept of fragmentation as a springboard for new creative opportunities.

close, I would like to think that the ghost of my dancing body continues to dance in the museum, hand in hand with the ghosts of those ancient Roman women. And alongside us, and alongside Clio, dances the ghost of 'likely' Terpsichore – and the last word must belong to her.

Epilogue

Before you close this book, before you leave this place - our museum home - there is one last thing we Muses wish you to see.

It's this gallery down here, just before the exit.

Please step inside, take a seat. Take a look around.

In this room, there are no objects; there are only ghosts.

This is a place of judgement. A trial is about to take place.

Mnemosyne watches over the proceedings.

In this place, it is she who is judge.

My sister Clio leads something forward to the dock.

She presents it to the witnesses.

Its head is bowed and its face hidden behind a mask.

There is a gasp in the gallery. Whispers. Fingers pointing.

It's the monster!

It's the one who turns men to stone, who frightens them witless, who petrifies.

It's the one whom men have feared for millennia, feared long after Perseus took a sword to her neck, lopped off her head and brandished it for all to see.

A most hideous head: vile, loathsome, with snakes for hair.

The head that became stone,

Body turned object,

Head of the Gorgon!

“History” has forgotten her side of the story, but it’s only right that she be heard.

She deserves a fair trial.

It’s only right that she be seen.

But how can that be? How can you look at her?

How can you look upon something that will turn you to stone?

You would be risking your own life.

She steps up to the stand. From behind her terrible mask, her eyes peer out.

They seem lifeless, still.

But they are forever moving, flickering in the stillness.

Shield your own eyes. You don’t want to look at her.

Don’t look at her, or you’ll be turned to stone.

Don’t look at her. “History” tells you so. Don’t look.

You turn your face away. You can’t bear to look;

that foul face, that ugliness, that pain.

You avert your gaze, look down at your hands.

As she stands in the dock, she begs you:

“Look at me, look at me,

Look at the snakes that bind me.

I want you to know the truth.”

The truth, what’s that?

How can we ever know the truth?

The truth of memory? The truth of history?

“Look at me, look at me,

Look at the snakes that bind me.

I want you to know my truth.

I am Medusa, daughter of Phorkys and Keto,

I am Medusa of the hissing venom.

I am Medusa of the stare of stone.

Look at me, look at me,

Look at the snakes that bind me.

I want you to know my truth.”

And as she speaks, you can’t help yourself. You look.

“I too am Medusa.

I didn’t lead him on.

I wasn’t asking for it.

Still he touched me, even when I said no.

You forget that it was me he raped,

Me he defiled at an altar.

He got away with it. They almost always do.

I am the one forever punished

For something I never wanted.

Look at me there. Look at me!

See me shaking after he had gone,

My body broken; blood on my dress.

Keep looking.

I don't want you to forget.

Do not forget.

They've always said that I was to be feared,

but keep looking and you'll see that I am the one who is afraid.

It is not men's fear that you should bear witness to. But mine.

I do not just turn to stone.

I am myself turned to stone.

It is I who am petrified."

As she speaks, her body begins to move,
shifts through time and space.

You keep looking at her,

and she looks back, but you are not turned to stone.

And as you look, and watch, and witness,
the stone mask that “history” has given her softens,

its sculpted surface becoming flesh once more.

Its terrible marble begins to shatter and fragment.

Its pieces scatter and reveal her face beneath.

Mnemosyne has granted her another way to be remembered.

This time, in her own words and in her own body.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: *Tragoedia Saltata* A Dance Vocabulary

This exercise was developed as part of the initial TORCH ‘Ancient Dance in Modern Dancers’ project (see Slaney 2017: 163-4). Known as ‘choreographic pick-n-mix,’ the task comprises three steps:

1. See below for a list of terms used by ancient authors to refer to a range of steps performed by pantomime dancers, with their approximate English translations. They are only a slight fraction of the choreographic ‘vocabulary’ available to ancient dancers and they are derived from observations of non-dance specialist spectators and commentators. A further caveat is that we do not know if an ancient performer would have conceived of such a glossary. The following list is to be considered a starting-point for the dancer’s movement investigation:

pēdēmata – leaps; *periagōgē* – spin, revolve (akin to pirouette?); *huptiasmos* – back-bend / turning upside down; *fluctuans spinula* – bending spine; *exapinēs epesēs* – suddenly falling down; *oklasantes exanistanai* – squat down and rise up again; *prossurousi ta skelē* – sweep the leg/s forward (a *battement*?); *diasurousi ta skelē* – sweep the leg/s to the side; *katanankazein* – to contort; *exaiphnēs pagios stasis* – sudden rigid stillness, posing *graphikōs* (like a picture); *helissein* – to coil, to twist; *seiein* – to shake, gyrate; *homozugoi tarsoi* – soles of the feet clapped (literally ‘yoked’) together.

Try to combine directions from this glossary into longer movement phrases.

2. Next, interpret the movement phrases with some of the terms for emotions or *pathē* represented in pantomime, as identified by Lucian:

orgē, ‘anger, rage’; *thrēnousai*, *lupē*, *penthos*, ‘to grieve’, ‘pain’, ‘sorrow’; *zēlotupia* ‘jealousy’; *phobos*, ‘terror’; *aidōs*, ‘shame’; *erōs*, ‘love, lust’; *mania* ‘psychosis, delusion’ [all citations from Lucian *The Dance*: ὀργή: 46 and 67; πένθος: 41 and 58; θρηνοῦσαι: 55; λύπη: 67; ζηλοτυπία: 50; φοβουμένη: 67; αἰδουμένη: 63; ἐρῶντα: 67; μεμηνότα: 67]

3. Finally, choose a story or a character from a pantomime scenario (characters from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* might be a starting-point) and repeat steps 1 and 2 in accordance with the narrative.

**Appendix 2: Exhibition Notes for *Likely Terpsichore?*
(*Fragments*), Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology,
April 2018**

ASHMOLEAN

MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)

Choreographed and performed by Marie-Louise Crawley

The title of this dance work refers to a seated Roman sculpture in the Randolph Greek and Roman Sculpture Gallery, considered likely to be Terpsichore, the ancient muse of dance.

You are invited to view the dance from multiple perspectives, to witness it as fragments glimpsed from above, below, close up or at a distance, seen against marble friezes and sculptures, or caught in passing through the glass of a vitrine.

*What does it mean to be a fragmented body?
To be scattered in a thousand pieces?
Missing hand – missing elbow – missing foot –
To be a body without a head,
a statue without a face?
To be faceless,
To be nameless,
To be almost –
To be upright, rooted to the spot.
To be enclosed, resisting petrification –
To be fixed,
To be held,
To be trying to escape –
Faceless, nameless woman of the past:
If I can unfix you, I can give you flesh.*

Level 1: bridge above Welcome Space
'Galatea' (first century CE, after Ovid)

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (book 10), the sculptor Pygmalion carves an ivory statue and falls in love with it. He prays to Venus for a bride who should be the living likeness of his statue. His prayers are granted and the statue comes to life. Although unnamed by Ovid, Galatea is the name commonly given to Pygmalion's statue.

Level 1: balcony above Greece G32-33
Myrrha (first century CE, after Ovid)

Myrrha's story (Ovid's *Metamorphoses* book 10) is one of father-daughter incest, of teenage pregnancy, of motherhood, of exile and of shame. Here, heavily pregnant and wandering alone in the desert, not wanting to live but thinking death too easy, Myrrha begs the gods to change her into some other form. The gods answer her

prayer and she is transformed into a tree, through which she gives birth to a son, Adonis.

Level 2: walkway overlooking G38-40

***Philomela* (first century CE, after Ovid)**

While the myth of Philomela has many variations, Ovid's version in *Metamorphoses* (book 6) is that after being raped and mutilated by her sister's husband who cuts out her tongue so that she cannot speak of her ordeal, Philomela obtains her revenge and is transformed into a nightingale.

Level 1: bridge above Welcome Space

***Medusa* (first century CE, after Ovid)**

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (book 4), Medusa is a young girl who, having been raped by Poseidon in Athena's temple, is punished for the rape: her hair is transformed into snakes and her face made so terrible that it turns onlookers to stone.

Telling Tales with the Body

'It is often forgotten that dance was linked to ancient myth from the beginnings of the Greek epic tradition. In Book 8 of Homer's *Odyssey*, the bard Demodocus performs his poetry alongside the dancers; and according to the second-century CE rhetorician Lucian, who wrote a treatise called *The Dance*, the ancient pantomime artist – a solo and masked dancer – regularly took the subject matter of his dances from Ovid's tales in the *Metamorphoses*. In the eighteenth century, dance reformers attempted to establish their art form as one of the fine arts that could compete equally with both drama and the visual arts. The choreographers turned to ancient pantomime as their model because they wanted dance not simply to consist of virtuoso performances; they wanted their new dance dramas to have something important to say. The first of these new *ballets d'action*, as they came to be known, was John Weaver's *The Loves of Mars and Venus* (performed at Drury Lane, 1717). Weaver's ballet is based on a story from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and, indirectly at least, from Homer's *Odyssey*; and this tale, according to Lucian, was a favourite of ancient pantomime. Weaver describes his ballet as 'a dramattick entertainment of dancing attempted in imitation of the pantomimes of the ancient Greeks and Romans'.

Marie-Louise Crawley's *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*, which retells in masked dance performance the harrowing stories of four women from Ovid's epic poem – Galatea, Myrrha, Philomela and Medusa, is therefore part of a long tradition of telling tales with the body both in antiquity and into the modern world. During six months as Artist in Residence at the APGRD, Marie-Louise developed her site-specific dance in the galleries of the Ashmolean Museum. During this time, she also contributed significantly to the APGRD's larger Leverhulme-funded 'Performing Epic' research project, which is investigating the impact of the classical epics in the performance arts, in any performance medium (including theatre, opera, dance, film and radio) from antiquity to the present (<http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/about-us/research/performing-epic>).'

Professor Fiona Macintosh, Director APGRD, Professor of Classical Reception, Fellow of St Hilda's, University of Oxford

Appendix 3: Questions and Responses from a Survey of Museum Visitors, Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, April 20th-21st 2018

Over the course of two performance days, a very small-scale study was undertaken under the auspices of the APGRD and the Ashmolean to gather some data as to how visitors reacted to the dance in the museum. Despite visitor numbers being in the thousands, only a handful of responses were collected, so here there can only be a sketch of an analysis of visitor reactions.

Questions devised by Marie-Louise Crawley and Fiona Macintosh, visitors surveyed at the Ashmolean Museum by Fiona Macintosh and Marchella Ward.

Questions and responses reproduced by kind permission of the APGRD and the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments) feedback

Twelve viewers completed the survey in total between 20/04/18 – 21/04/18. One respondent simply ticked all of the boxes except two. Three respondents answered only the first three questions (front side of the page). One response is particularly difficult to read because of the handwriting, but no alterations have been made except the correction of obvious spelling errors.

Q1. Do you think the mask enhances or detracts from the power of the dance?

Visitor A: Enhances

B. Enhances, especially the contrast of taking it on and off

C. Enhances

D. No

E. It really worked well with the mask, it indeed enhanced

F. In the most part enhances. Whilst not ‘detracting’ the mask invites attention and this both heightens and at times diminishes the expression of the body as a total expressive ‘instrument’.

G. I think it enhances the dance!

H. Enhances

I. Enhances because facial expression would make it too psychological

J. The first impression of the dance was very mysterious. I think the reason is the mask so I absolutely agree the mask is good for the dance, telling the ancient stories.

K. Neither, might be more impactful if mask related to character performed, e.g. had mask for Myrrha, snake for Medusa etc.

Q2. To what extent might dance offer new ways of re-telling familiar stories?

- A. Visual dramatisations of performances = offering new perspectives?
- B. Attracts a different audience that may need more visual stimuli
- C. It's an abstract interpretation of storytelling through movement
- D. In an excellent way, help us re-imagine, makes history more visible, play on a variety of senses
- E. Dance is a very interesting way of exploring narrative as well as emotional states in a different way that can introduce new perspectives through gesture, rhythm etc.
- F. To a great extent – that's what dance does, doesn't it?
- G. Enormously / other dimensions always appreciated. It's always a pleasure to have the dance engage with these epic tales
- H. Strong – makes the viewer interpret
- I. I never imagined the dance when I had entered the room and I looked at the objects again. Though I can't understand the meaning of the dance (stories) it is a good way to remind us of the life of the people who lived a long time ago.
- J. Song and dance could definitely bring people to watch more. Dance alone can but might need some communication about the dance.

Q3. Does the dance offer you another way of viewing and / or experiencing ancient history and culture?

- A. Certainly 😊
- B. Yes, it's rare to see history of culture being so active
- C. Yes
- D. Yes
- E. Absolutely. Fills in the text, fragments and artefacts we have.
- F. Yes, very much so, particularly when viewed in context. The objects can appear to take on a new 'life' – the dance invites attention on weight, texture, materiality and can bring history 'to life'.

G. Yes it does.

H. Yes. It brings it alive, taking us (the viewer) back to classical times, experiencing performance to some extent as they did in the past, and it engages the emotions powerfully.

I. Definitely – a fresh way of seeing how it is still alive and creative

J. Yes. It made the objects alive in the room. It connected the time, past and present.

K. Yes, though currently is not preferred method.

Q4. How far (if at all) did the dance affect your thinking about women from ancient myth?

A. It made me review mythology with a new view and made it harder to ignore some of the darker sides

B. Help making women more visible. Adding to the often male-centred sources (written, at least).

C. As long as dance / women are not only sexualised, but rather performed in a diverse way, may add to sculptures etc. Women as agents, not only objects.

D. The strength of the physicality combined with the variation from vulnerability to power reminds us of how women in ancient myth hold stories and experiences that need to be told in multiple ways to appreciate their presence (and absence) in mythmaking.

E. Yes it does – it expresses emotions involved with the stories

F. Focuses the mind

G. Made them feel less passive

H. A little, reading the stories paints a good picture but seeing [isolated?] actions can however have some glossed over points. There are other stories that have more empowered women characters.

Q5. Roman women are depicted in the museum collection: to what extent did the dance influence your view of these women?

A. It made me seriously think about ancient portrayal of women

B. Yes

C. Ancient strong

D. The dance helps to rethink the idea of ‘depiction’ and ‘viewing’. The breathing, sweating, dancing body is a reminder that women have agency however they are rendered by others and petrified through time.

E. ?

F. The focus on the individual women and their (usually harrowing) histories does make you think differently when looking at museum artefacts.

G. N/A didn’t have chance to compare

H. Very little, the women portrayed are very specific to particular myths and are portrayed only a handful of times.

Q6. Does the dance offer you another way of viewing this museum’s collection?

A. It does, it offers a much more alive and active experience

B. Can see their grace but also their power

C. Yes – by inviting the viewer to view the dance next to / above / within / between different rooms, levels, walkways, thereby suggesting new connections and new perspectives on material objects.

D. Yes

E. (See above)

F. Yes – it contradicts the idea that the collection is “dead”

G. Unlikely, many artefacts and art pieces depict snapshots of stories anyway. Maybe used to show another side? Otherwise it’s difficult to place dance connection to object.

Q7. Which of these pieces, in your view, was the most effective and why?

A. Philomela, the area used can be seen from many angles, creating an interesting viewing perspective

B. Only saw the last dance. Saw anger and despair. Her mask makes performance universal and relevant to all women.

C. I only saw the performance from the bridge, which I liked very much.

D. Up and down the arms. Thank you.

E. The second – because of its proximity to and relationships with the collection, offering the most vivid re-reading of the statues and objects, particularly as the dance moves above the otherwise powerful figure below.

F. We only saw the last 2 – the last one was very evocative.

G. Difficult to answer this as I wasn't able to see them all (I work on the Info. Desk). Also the viewer doesn't actively know which of the 4 performances they are currently watching. (Apologies, this feedback was scribbled between dealing with people / enquiries / telephone etc.)

H. Myrrha – most vivid and emotional

I. Myrrha, most full [?] with particularly poignant poses and dance techniques.